LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. 35 Copyright No.

Shelf PZ3
.B397 Mig

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Miss Good-for-nothing

(Ma'm'selle Unnütz)

BY

W. Heimburg.

E. A. WEEKS & COMPANY,
CHICAGO.

The Marguerite Series. No. 11. Sept. 1, 1893. Issued Semi-Monthly. Subscription Price, $6.00 Per Year. Entered at Chicago Post-office as Second-Class Matter.

MISS GOOD-FOR-NOTHING.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

W. HEIMBURG

BY

HETTIE E. MILLER

LIBRARY OF
COPYRIGHT
JUN 23 1893
CITY OF WASHINGTON
29510 y 1

CHICAGO
E. A. WEEKS & COMPANY
276 & 278 FRANKLIN ST.

PZ3
.B397 Mig

Copyrighted 1893
BY
E. A. WEEKS & COMPANY

Miss Good-For-Nothing

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Letter	5
II.	Not One, but two Children Coming	23
III.	Rika's Charges	28
IV.	The Two Families	37
V.	No More Darkness in the World	47
VI.	Dreams	68
VII.	An Idyl: Then Dissolution	79
VIII.	The Night of the Ball	94
IX.	God Commands	103
X.	The Maternal Eye	109
XI.	Love and Coquetry	177
XII.	Father and Daughter	130
XIII.	A Suitor for Miss Good-for-norning	140
XIV.	Sunshine that Makes Dark Shadows	160
XV.	Miss Good-eor-nothihg Engages to Leave her Old Home	167
XVI.	Nature and Love Smiles	172
XVII.	Destiny Makes Strange Sport	179
XVIII.	A Conjugal Tete-a-tete	185
XIX.	Bad News	192
XX.	How the Returned Soldier is Received	200
XXI.	Ghosts of the Past	206
XXII.	How Frieder Wins Applause from a Fashionable Audience	216
XXIII.	A Seed of Bitterness	225
XXIV.	Which was the Greater Grief?	247
XXV.	Together, But Far Apart	256
XXVI.	Tempest Tossed on Rough Seas	258
XXVII.	At Last	261

MISS GOOD-FOR-NOTHING.

CHAPTER I.

THE LETTER.

The holiday was over. One of the quiet, dark days between Christmas and New Year was drawing to a close; fine snow-flakes were falling, it was bitterly cold and a brisk east wind kept people indoors. Only the old postman with his high rubber boots walked along the narrow foot-path; occasionally he entered a house, bringing messages from abroad, containing good and bad news, happy tidings and the reverse, without changing countenance in the least, secure in the sense of his irresponsibility.

"So I have to go out there too, to-night," he muttered, pausing under a lamp and examining a registered letter which bore the address:

"Fraulein Friederike Trautmann,
Andersheim a. Rhein.
Germania."

The old man shook his head and with a sigh of vexation turned into a street which was darker and quieter than the rest. He quickened his pace and in ten minutes, with the aid of his small lantern, found the place he was in search of. He rang the bell at a door in the garden-wall, whereupon a dog began to bark, and immediately thereafter a house-bell rang, and a dim light disclosed the outlines of a handsome dwelling.

"Ho there!" cried the man without, "it is the postman! Can I see the mistress?"

The door in the wall was opened, and a brown-haired boy of about twelve years stared with curious surprise now at the letter, now at the bearer.

"For Aunt?" he asked breathlessly.

"For Fraulein Trautmann!"

"Mother," he called out, running along the narrow, paved walk to the house, "a letter for Aunt!"

The door with the tiny peep-window on the right hand in the large, dark entrance-hall opened, and a woman, lamp in hand, appeared on the threshold. Upon her hair, scarcely tinged with gray, she wore a black lace cap, while on her longish, colorless face was an expression of astonishment.

"For my sister? A letter?"

From the kitchen likewise thither hastened the maid, a healthy, honest creature, who seemed too, speechless with surprise.

"Give it to me," said the lady, descending the steps, "where is the letter?"

"I am sorry, madam, but it must be delivered into the hands of the person for whom it is intended. Is the Fraulein not at home?"

"Into the hands—of the person—for whom it is intended?" stammered Frau Roettger.

"Yes, I can do nothing else."

"The fraulein is up-stairs—Luischen, take the lamp and show the man the way!"

The boy had to be of the party. He preceded them, taking three steps at a time, and rushed along the hall at a pace as if he were trying to escape from a fire. "Aunt," his voice rang out in the corridor, "Aunt Riekchen, a letter!"

He burst open the door of her room and cried once more:

"A letter, Aunt Riekchen! You are to have a letter!"

"I? A letter?" was the reply.

This voice likewise expressed the greatest surprise, but the voice was so gentle, so melodious, that the old postman involuntarily moderated his gruff tone and said politely: "Good evening, Fraulein, here is something to sign."

Thereupon a form, up to this time seated at the window, rose and quietly crossed the room; a match was struck, a wax-taper lighted in a bright brass candlestick, and a fair hand extended for the letter.

"If you please, put your name here."

The characters were irregular, for the hand that wrote them trembled. "Is there anything to be paid?" asked the receiver of the letter.

"No, Fraulein!"

"No? Ah, wait!" And the trembling fingers slipped a piece of money in the postman's right hand.

"Good evening—thank you very much!"

In the vestibule his heavy footsteps died away; within stood Fraulein Friederike Trautmann, the letter in her hand, not daring to open it. The cheeks of the boy before her were crimson with impatience and excitement.

"Aunt, why do you not read it?" he burst forth.

She started. "Go down stairs, Fritz!" she said, stroking his curly head.

"But from whom is it, aunt?"

"I do not know."

"It is from Italy, look at the post-mark!"

"Yes—but I do not know who sent it—go, my boy! —Go!" she repeated, as he hesitated.

The handsome boy in the gray jacket left the room

unwillingly. She followed him to the door, bolted it after him and then seated herself at the table upon which was the taper.

She was no longer young, she was over forty, but her face still bore traces of former beauty. Sorrow had bleached her fair hair and rendered her once bright eyes dim; it had produced deep furrows about the tiny mouth, and dark circles beneath the eyes, still at this moment a glimmer of youthfulness flitted over the agitated countenance. "From Italy!" she murmured. "News from him? From whom could it be, but from him?"

She broke the seal and read. She could not see well and was forced to lean over the paper, suddenly her head bowed lower and a moan rang through the room. She sprang up so hastily that the taper fell upon the floor; it went out and the room was in darkness. Only after some time did sobs come from the armchair at the window which was dimly lighted up by the snow without, feverish, bitter sobs, which did not cease until a heavy hand knocked at the door and Frau Roettger's voice cried: "Are you not coming to the table, Friederike? The potatoes will be cold!"

"Please excuse me," answered Riekchen Trautmann.

"Why, what's the matter? Come, out with it! We are beside ourselves with anxiety!" was the irritable reply from without.

"Later on—I will come down, Minna."

"You are a block-head! For my part—"

Frau Roettger's steps died away. Friederike Trautmann had ceased weeping; she sat, her head resting on her hand, gazing out of the window. The garden lay there in the ghostly twilight, the two leafless nut-trees at the hedge stood out darkly against the gray

background; Fraulein Trautmann could plainly see the ice-floats in the Rhine. How terribly desolate all was! Had there ever really been a spring during which the world was filled with the fragrance of the budding foliage and flowers, in which the moonlight danced upon the stream and the nightingales warbled? Had there ever been an evening on which she stood under the nut tree in a white gown and with throbbing heart watched the skiff which bore him to her? It had been a brief dream; frost had fallen that night, a frost so merciless and destructive, that no bud ever opened again.

They would not hear of her following the strange artist, who had come—God knew whence—to set up his easel wherever he found a picturesque spot. Her father had hinted at "breadless professions," her mother at the frivolity of such handsome young men to whom their velvet jackets were very becoming, but who, as sure as she breathed, were altogether worthless and only existed to render girls, and later on their poor wives miserable. But her sister, who was not as pretty as she was, could not forgive the young man for having eyes only for "Riekchen," for having on the evening when they rowed home from the green taken his Riekchen from the skiff in which she, Minna Trautmann, sat, into a small boat, and that she, notwithstanding the distance at which this boat kept from the other, could distinctly see with her keen falcon-like eyes, in what a close embrace they sat.

It had been *she* who betrayed them to her mother, and the morning which dawned upon the Trautmann home brought with it tears for Riekchen's eyes. At night she went out once more to bid him farewell. Her sister saw her and called out from her bed: "Stay here, it is not proper—do you know?"

Riekchen went, however, with a defiant: "Tell it if you like! No one can prevent our last farewell, at any rate!"

But Minna betrayed nothing. The sob which escaped her sister as she ceased speaking, must have touched her, and Riekchen was permitted to spend beneath the old nut-tree undisturbed, the most painful, the bitterest hour of her life.

At this moment she could see his pale face clearly.

"You were right, girl, to submit! What do you want with a poor devil!" These were the words with which he received her. But when she clung to him, sobbing passionately, and repeating :"I will be true to you, I shall never forget you, I cannot give you up!" he too turned pale and their tears mingled.

"Will you write to me?" she asked at length.

"If you wish, dear Riekchen!'

"It will be my one pleasure!"

After a pause, she said: "Heinrich, will you remain faithful to me?"

"I—I—surely—but you?"

"Oh, always, always!" she sobbed.

"Do you now, Riekchen—I do not believe it, you are too pretty and attractive for that."

"Heinrich, so help me God, I will look at no other man, I will wait for you even should I grow old and gray! If you are ever in trouble, you will tell me, will you not, and were you to require the stars from heaven, I would obtain them for you; if I knew it would be for your good, I would go with you to-night, without hesitation—but—"

"But?"

"They say it would be your misfortune as well as mine!"

"Mine? That is a matter of indifference!"

"But you must be happy! I do not wish to stick to you like a burdock—your art needs freedom . . go . . . but think of me, do not forget me!"

"Cease weeping," be comforted, after a pause, "Italy is not out of the world—"

"Ah, Heinrich, much too far for love! And the maidens there—are very beautiful, I have read."

Then both laughed amid their tears and again kissed one another. "Never mind the maidens—not one is as beautiful as you!"

Once more their lips whispered: "Farewell! I will be true to you!" "Come back—I will await you—God watch over you!"

After the lapse of many yeras, she fancied she could hear the splashing of the oars, his last cry from over the water: "Farewell, my lovely darling!"

Ah, and then! Dark, desolate were the days that followed. To day she could not tell whether she had waked or dreamed during all this time. But one single thing was prominent amid the monotony: his letters; they brightened her life like the twinkling stars in the dark sky. Then came a suitor—she rejected him; another—she refused him; her father became angry at the constantly repeated words: "I shall not marry!"

"She cannot forget the artist," explained her sister. And once when Riekchen was out, her mother went through her portfolio, found Heinrich's address, and her father wrote an extremely emphatic letter, to the effect that he forbade the silly correspondence, for the girl was commencing to be reasonable and to consider a suitable match.

Riekchen suspected nothing; but her lover's silence caused her unutterable suffering. Finally, one Christ-

mas Eve, she was taken ill. Down stairs they were celebrating her sisters' betrothal with the referendary, Roettger; she raved about *him* in the quiet sick room, and this question rang constantly in the nurse's ear: "Have you forgotten me, dear? The maids there are so much more beautiful, ah, so much more beautiful!"

When she recovered, Minna's marriage took place. In the church Riekchen fainted, she was not yet strong. Everyone thought, however, she looked remarkably lovely with her curly head and the white blossoms in her hair. Captain Erbenstein thought so too, but she maintained that it took very little to interest him—and the captain had to make the best of it.

The years glided by. First her father died, then her mother, and the dying woman took her hand, as she said: "You did not *want* to be happy, child—how it grieves me!"

The girl replied almost gayly: "Dear, little mother, I *wanted* to, indeed, but I—"

"Could not," she was about to say, still she did not wish her mother to carry a reproach to the grave with her, and so she contented herself with adding: "But I did not understand how, I have no talent for it."

Then she was left alone in the large house bequeathed to her. Her sister came occasionally, she brought a child with her, a fine, brown-haired boy, who knew how to creep into the lonely woman's heart with his clear, childish laughter. He preferred being with his aunt to being at home, and when death dissolved the unhappy marriage, little Friedrich as well as his mother, came altogether to his aunt's house. Frau Roettger accepted gladly her sister's offer: that

she occupy the ground floor, for she pretended to be in straitened circumstances; the deceased having squandered her tidy little income, as she scornfully said.

Though in reality she had it all, and even more, for she had been exceedingly close and economical.

Well, Riekchen helped her. She had no one else to care for, the boy was all that was dear to her in the world; for what else should the old maid use her money! Aunt Riekchen was raised to the doubtful dignity of an aunt with an inheritance, and Frau Minna agreed with her as well as her quarrelsome, dogmatical disposition would permit. They could never understand each other, nor was that necessary. Below, Frau Minna might continue to give her coffee-parties and to crochet and knit her interminable counterpanes, up-stairs there lived something better; there, old memories spoke in the solitary, twilight hour, there, still stood a sketch upon the easel, thither came books and magazines, there came from the piano Beethoven's and Schumann's grand melodies and—there sat the boy listening to stories of olden times, studying his Latin, or playing upon his violin.

So by degrees she grew calm. But once when her sister, with her lack of tact, touched the old wound, the pain returned more bitter and deep than ever. She had always longed to know what had become of him—if he were dead, if he had returned to Germany, if he were living happily and comfortably, or if he had remained there, had taken a wife and forgotten the old love.

Never had any tidings reached her, never—until to-day. Then they came—but what tidings!

She rose abruptly, like one who had formed a hasty

resolution, lifted the candle, fetched a dark, old-fashioned cloak and hood from the adjoining apartment, and, the letter in her hand, left the room. On descending the stairs she repaired to the kitchen, bade the maid light a lantern and prepare to accompany her, then she knocked at her sister's door.

"Come in!" Frau Minna sat at the round table by the lamp, crocheting; her son was reading.

"Heavens, how you look!" cried the former, looking in affright at her sister's pale face. "What ails you? Tell me!"

"I have news from—" the name would not pass her pallid lips—"from Italy—"

"God bless me! He is surely not coming back? Or are you to go to him! My gracious, that affair is lasting!"

Aunt Riekchen stood erect and made no reply.

"Well, does he still want you? Has he at length got so far that he can support a wife."

"He is dead," answered Fraulein Riekchen.

For an instant Frau Minna was startled by the suppressed anguish in her sister's tone. She wanted to speak, but nothing occurred to her, she only looked with a puzzled air after the form, which passed through the door.

Immediately afterward the bell below rang and Aunt Riekchen left the house.

"Where is aunt going?" asked the boy.

"How do I know? She probably wishes to order a wreath—but she cannot send one so far—God only knows what she intends to do. I am glad that there will now be an end of it."

"Was it Aunt Reikchen's lover?"

"Yes, it was. But study; she will come back. When

anything goes wrong with her, she goes out, if it is raining pitchforks. When the storm within her has spent its fury, she remembers where she lives."

Fritz obediently bent his head over his book, but he could not study. He loved his aunt dearly; in her society he found compensation for the prose with which his mother surrounded herself, and that she was forced to suffer, made him sad and restless.

"If I only knew, where she had gone," he ventured to say after a pause.

"Study!"—

Meanwhile Fraulein Riekchen Trautmann in the snow storm passed through several dark streets and approached a high, gabled house, on the lower floor of which a light glimmered through the shutters.

"Is your master at home?"

"Certainly!" replied the old man, who wore a sort of livery. "He is just smoking his pipe, and mistress is arranging the chess-board."

"Ask him if I can intrude for a moment!"

"At any time! Why should I ask? I can always admit you, Fraulein Riekchen.' And without advancing to the door of the room, he called out in a voice of thunder: "Mistress, Trautmann's Riekchen is here!" Then he opened a door, and the laughing, still pretty face of a woman appeared in the frame.

"Come in, dear Riekchen, my old man already looks like pure sunshine!" And drawing her visitor over the threshold, she cried: "Lo! Now take off your cloak and hood. That was a sensible idea! You will take a glass of wine? Old man, I will fetch some of the *Eberbacher*—and now amuse yourselves in the meantime, for I can see by your noses that you have secrets!—Well, I am not jealous, although I have cause to be!" she called back.

"Chatterbox!" said with a smile a tall, elderly man, who, one could see at a glance, was a doctor. He took his guest's hand and forced Riekchen to be seated beside him on the old-fashioned sofa. "Now, how can I be of service to you? Is Frau Minna angry again? Or has your heart rebelled? You look pale, Fraulein Riekchen—you must not sit so much, you must walk more—"

"I have not come about my health, dear Doctor, I want other advice, a favor of your brother—is he still at Florence?"

"Yes—at least he was still there four weeks ago."

"I have a great favor to ask of him."

"Which he will surely be glad to grant you."

"Of course, it is understood, he shall have no expense, *I* will attend to that; I only wish to ask him to go to Rome, there to seek out a certain woman, to obtain a child from her and to bring the same over the Alps to Basle where I will receive him."

"Lord! That sounds quite mysterious!"

"It is no secret," said she, smiling faintly. "This boy is the son of a friend of my youth, who died recently. In a letter, which he wrote two days before his death and which, according to his wishes, one of his colleagues sent to me, he asks me to interest myself in his boy and to bring him to Germany."

"What is the child's name?"

She clutched at her throat as if to strangle something. "Friedrich Adami," came forth hesitatingly.

"Ah—pardon, Reikchen, I know the name—I myself once—"Suffered by it," he was on the point of saying, but paused and looked into the pure, noble face of the girl whom he had once ardently loved and by whom he had been rejected for this stranger's sake.

"So you are going to take the child?"

"Yes, dear Doctor!"

"How old is he?"

"Thirteen, about the age of Fritz Roettger."

"Do you know what you are taking upon yourself?"

"Perfectly well!"

"Then I will write to Oscar. As I know, he will be delighted to make a journey to Rome. Your offer of money he will not be able to refuse—Heaven knows, that to-day, notwithstanding his age, which is six and thirty, money is very scarce with him."

"And at Basle or Zurich, or wherever he likes, I will take the boy from him."

"I think, Riekchen, if he comes so far, he would like to see the old home once again, and for that I will send him the necessary means."

"That would be still better! You know, dear Doctor, in all my life I have not been outside of our nest. But here is the address. Signora Adami, Piazza de Cappuccini 16."

"Thank you!" said the old gentleman, writing down the name.

The doctor's wife entered with the wine glasses and bottle, as Riekchen was preparing to leave. Not a bit of it!" cried she, "you must first drink some wine! Am I to have my trip to the cellar for nothing?" And she forced a glass upon the girl.

"Now then, Fraulein Riekchen, let us drink to the success of your plan!" said Doctor Kortum.

"Heavens, what is the matter?" cried the pretty, little woman with the sparkling, black eyes.

"She intends to adopt a child."

The doctor's wife clasped her hands above her head. "Nonsense!" cried she. "Come, be sensible—it is not true!"

"It is, wife! Do not look so astonished!"

"But the responsibility! I would rather take a pug-dog or a couple of canaries—"

"Be still, wife, she is doing a good deed! But—what will Frau Minna say?"

"I am going now to tell her," replied Riekchen, somewhat despondently.

What will Minna say?" exclaimed the doctor's wife. She will look like our dog, Peter, when I take his bowl of milk from him— O ho! I would not be bold enough to tell her that!"

"It is difficult," said the pale girl softly, and her eyes looked vacant. "Good-bye; she is awaiting me!"

In fifteen minutes she again reached home and entered the sitting-room. Frau Minna was just eating a baked apple, Fritz was carelessly turning the pages of his stamp album.

"Ah, how glad I am that you have come, Aunt," he cried, "now we can finish the chapter of the 'Leather Stocking Tales!'"

She suddenly laid her hand upon his head. "Fritz, look at me—you are to have a companion; I am to have a visit, a long visit from a boy of your age—are you pleased?"

"Excellent!" exclaimed the boy. "You are famous, Aunt!"

"What nonsense is this?" asked Frau Minna.

"Adami's son is coming to me," explained Riekchen, with apparent composure, though her bosom heaved.

"On a visit?"

"No—provisionally—forever, Minna."

The lady on the sofa changed color. "That means —that means—that you—"

"That I shall take care of him!"

"That you are mad!" cried Frau Minna. And when her sister with a quiet 'Good-night" evaded all further discussion, she burst into a nervous laugh. "So!" she cried, striking the palm of her hand upon the table, "so! Now it is complete, now wipe your mouth, you poor beggar!"

"Mother—" the boy tried to soothe her, but she pushed him aside, fled to her bedroom, and there she moaned as if the direst misfortune had come to her, while the boy formed the brightest plans for the future by the side of his companion.

Aunt Riekchen sat up-stairs and once more read the long letter the tremulous characters of which betrayed the hand of a sufferer.

"The thought that you will fulfil my request, makes death easy to me. I have no right to ask, I know, but I know, too, that you have not forgotten me. Too late I learned that your father wrote me an untruth when he informed me that you were happy by the side of another.

"We have both been greatly sinned against, poor child! Yet we are not the only ones in the world to whom it has happened, not the only ones who have learned what denial means. I have a son, Friederike, I love him inexpressibly; as long as I live, he is safe, but—*then*? His mother—I must make no complaints —Take the child, give him some love, some sunshine! God bless you for it! He will honor you as your own child—give him kindness and patience, give him love!

"When, long years ago, I received the letter from your father mentioned above, I felt as an old German folk song runs: 'Mir war's, als sei verschwunden die Soun' am hellen Tag—"I cannot to-day express my feelings at the time. My creative power, my will seemed paralyzed, altogether paralyzed.

"My landlady's daughter saved me from the worst, in order—to cause me to experience still worse. I earned *nothing*, I scarcely ever came home from the wine-vaults, I broke with the families, who advised me to mend my ways; I had reached the brink of the abyss. The landlady, afterward my mother-in-law, informed me one day that I could not stay in the house any longer, unless I paid the rent in arrears—I laughed and showed her my empty pockets. She thereupon, in the shrieking manner of her tribe, began to call out murder, to threaten me with the police—and her daughter stood pale and speechless at the door. When the old woman at length left the room, she took the girl with her, and outside began a dispute between the two women, while I collected a few articles which the pawn-broker's shop had not yet swallowed up.

"The girl's full, deep voice finally gained the victory; the little house was quiet—

"Ah, Friederike, it is difficult for me to write you this, but I think you have a right to know how I won my wife. On the evening of this day, I just had my last trinket in my hand and was about to give it to worthy Donna Marchi in part payment, and after that to leave the house never to return, when a low rap came at the door and Julia rushed into the room.

"Signor Federigo," she whispered, "you need not move—keep your studio, mother will let you, you will not hear another cross word."

"How is that?" I asked indifferently; I cared not indeed whether I went or remained.

"I have—" she hesitated and looked at me in the twilight with her dark eyes which were filled with tears. She was a small, dainty creature, without a trace of color in her sallow face. I had scarcely no-

ticed her when she sat at her loom and wove silken threads into ribbons, as she had learned to do at a cousin's at Sorrento.

"What have you done, Julia?

"I have paid mother," she said, "I saved in secret of what I earned, but she must not know it, Signor, she would beat me to death."

"I will not accept that, Julia," said I, curtly. "You are a good child, but—that is impossible! Go, call your mother!"

"Then the girl fell at my feet and began to weep, bitterly, and passionately, at intervals uttering incoherent words—I should not go, I should not leave her, without me she could not live, for—she loved me. She must acknowledge it, it was a fact, and she would suffocate if she could not tell it. If I went away, she would follow me, and she would not utter a sound were I to scold her and trample upon her. Then I raised her, drew her to my heart and thought, that you had deserted me, and that this poor child of the people was far above the lady who broke the celebrated German faith. After a few days she became my wife and sat as usual at her loom, while my mother-in-law washed for aristocratic families, and I was compelled to work likewise, for times were hard and on Sundays and holidays my wife wished to be seen at the theatre or in a café.

"Wretchedness, mental wretchedness was not lacking. At first, after the birth of my boy, there was—but then—I, the child upon my arm, bravely fought against the influence of ignorance and coarseness; from the time that his intellect began to awaken, I took the boy into my studio, under my eyes, I worked until illness snatched brush and palette from my hand and

increasing weakness could not prevent my darling from fleeing from the dismal sick-chamber to seek associates in the street who were not suitable for him. My wife worked doubly hard; the cradle with another child stood beside her. During the past year she has been in my room a great deal, much to my annoyance—God forgive me—for her every word was a reproach, an accusation against the miserable man to whom she had given her heart.

"Then I learned that you had been true to me! That was the hardest trial, and yet so beautiful. Thank you, Friederike! Once more I ask you, instill in the child your noble disposition, your refined thoughts, your fidelity! Farewell, and forgive me! I never have forgotten you!"

Friederike Trautmann sat for some time, the letter in her hand. The candle had burned low and gone out—she did not notice it. A strange, tormenting bitterness seized upon her heart.

"Oh, you!" she whispered, extending her hand toward her parents' picture's, "had you the *right* to make us both so miserable?" The more she pondered upon it the greater grew her longing for the child of the beloved man. All, all, that he asked of her for his son would she give him, and more, much more! As a dying man drinks, so did she drink in in anticipation the moment in which she would outstretch her arms to draw this child to her heart. Would to God, he was now beside her!

CHAPTER II.

NOT ONE, BUT TWO CHILDREN COMING.

The day drew near; time passed slowly, but it passed.

The preparation had afforded the young foster-mother many a secret pleasure, though the taunts of her sister, the anxious air of her nephew who by degrees had been persuaded by his mother, that he would be bitterly wronged by the appearance of the "strange bumpkin," occasioned her many a heartache. Still she pursued her course. Two days before the expected arrival all was in order, at least in the upper story of the old house, which bore its pointed gabled roof-like a head-covering which was in proportion but much too high and whose innumerable lutherns resembled drowsy eyes. The old rusty weather-vane creaked in the west wind, which blew across the Rhine, and in the streets of the small town were to be seen the young people in all kinds of cheap attire for it was Rose Monday, and at least the *little* people wanted to have their festal procession, as did the *grown-ups* in sacred Cologne and golden Mayence.

Fritz Roettger rushed up the stairs to Aunt Riekchen's room, although his mother had warned him that the said aunt would have eyes for him no longer.

His mother was right. Aunt Riekchen sat silent and pale upon the sofa, and before her stood Uncle Doctor with a letter in his hand, he too, seeming to

share her loss of self-possession, for he thoughtfully scratched his head. Fritz, through his black horse-hair wig, by means of which he had converted himself into a "Ratzdimaus-efallenjungen," heard him say plainly: "Yes, that is just so, my dear Fraulein Riekchen; remember, there was no alternative. Here you have the letter. At present nothing can be changed, and later—it may be done. Forced—why are you standing there and staring, silly boy," he called to Fritz, who was listening open-mouthed. "Run down stairs, I already hear the music." And when the abashed child had vanished, the doctor continued: "*Forced* to take the second too, as foster-child, you can not be. Surely, Adami must have some relatives in Germany whose duty it is to provide for the children?"

"He has none, dear doctor!"

"Well, it will all be arranged. But my brother was in a very awkward position; just fancy—what does he write? And he began to read:

"I cannot describe to you how things looked in the small house near by the church of the Capuchins. The dusty, desolate studio, in the center of which stood the bier of the young woman who, they told me, had caught the terrible disease while caring for her consumptive husband, and who succumbed to it in an incredibly short time; added to this, an old, half idiotic person, the dead woman's mother, who raised a veritable howl at the trouble she would have with a child, too, a horrible, ill-natured child. She would keep the elder, if I would only take *that* one along, and she pointed to a corner in which a tiny girl cowered, a miserable, emaciated creature, with large expressionless eyes, whom scoldings and blows did

not seem to hurt, probably, because she had been accustomed to them from the very first.

"I put an end to the repugnant scene by declaring that I wished to take both children. It was arbitrary and reckless, I confess, but my heart revolted at the sight of the pitiful, little creature, and I do not think that high-mindedness and magnanimity are so completely dead in the world as to allow such a poor thing to die. Were I some one else, dear brother, I would keep her myself—but as it is—"

"I will keep her," interrupted Riekchen's voice, "it must be so. The pleasure in this step is still to come," she added, "at present it is done under the influence of necessity." And she pressed her old friend's hand.

Resolved not to do her work by halves and to take both of Adami's children, Riekchen summoned her maid and began to make more noise in the house, just above the bedroom of Frau Roettger, who was at the moment putting her black cap of woolen lace upon her head. Black woolen lace seemed to her the most practical, it required no washing and was durable.

"Luischen!" she called into the room in which the maid was mending the fire, "what is the matter again up-stairs?"

Luischen left the apartment to find out and returned with a face pale with affright. "For God's sake, Frau Roettger, the mistress is setting up a second bed, a small one; she had it carried down from the upper floor and put next to her bedroom, and Katie says, not one, but two children are coming."

"God have mercy on us!" exclaimed the horrified woman, "what is she thinking of? Our house is no foundling's home!" And on the spur of the moment

she rushed up the broad oak staircase and entered the open door of a small alcove room which had served her late father, the justice, as an office. There now stood a small latticed bedstead in which once both sisters had dreamed their childish dreams and in which Fraulein Riekchen was just laying a pillow to answer for a feather-bed.

"Well, I would not believe it—now I see it," said Frau Roettger in a low voice.

"I can scarcely believe it myself," replied her sister, taking an old chintz curtain from the table in order to hold it up to the window.

"At least you seem to wish to furnish more simply for this new addition," came from Frau Minna's quivering lips, "or will it all be newly papered and painted, and will dozens of the most expensive toys be piled up here as they are for the prince over there?" She pointed to the door opposite, above which hung a simple "God bless your entrance!" framed in fir branches.

Riekchen made no reply and began to fasten the dotted, red material up at the window. What should she have said? Any remark would have caused the storm to burst, the storm which had lurked in the air of that house so long, and she *wanted* peace, peace for the children's sakes.

The excited woman controlled herself in the face of this composure, she only heaved a deep sigh and said: "Did father and mother know of it, they would turn in their graves, not once, but twice!" With these words she left the room, to put on her black silk for she was invited to a coffee-party at Frau Gerbach's, where all met to partake of punch and cake. There she sat and with eyes upturned to heaven main-

tained that an old maid was a veritable cross. Riekchen had caprices innumerable, but she, she washed her hands in innocence. Everything would be topsy-turvy. "Well, you will see, children, depend upon it!"

CHAPTER III.

RIKA'S CHARGES.

Ash Wednesday, and everything quiet, melancholy and still; the adults complained of headache, the children of disordered stomachs, and in addition a disagreeable east wind was blowing, which even through the crevices in the windows sought its victims with sore throats and colds.

Frau Roettger was having a large washing done; what cared she for the reception festivities above-stairs? The damp air of the laundry found its way to the large hall hung with portraits darkened by age, and mingled with the odor of freshly baked cake which came from the Fraulein's new kitchen up-stairs. For Frau Minna had declared that henceforth it would be better for each family to maintain a separate establishment.

Frau Roettger prided herself upon always speaking her mind "frankly." That this praiseworthy maxim could be applied in a manner which might prove insulting, she did not realize; with her, rudeness and truth were synonymous. Her saying was: "I cannot dissemble. He who does not like me as I am, can stay away from me. Such an affected, considerate manner as Riekchen has, is disgusting to me, it is neither one thing nor the other, it is neither lukewarm nor hot, basta!"

"You must go into the sitting-room, silly boy, and

do not stand gaping, when the strange children come!" she said roughly to her son.

Fritz made a wry face, for he had already had to refuse his aunt's invitation to partake of supper with her; but there could be no rebellion against his mother's will. He contented himself with a seat at the window from which post he watched the gate in the wall as anxiously as if he were at a standing in the forest.

Up-stairs someone else sat at the window and waited. It was a medium-sized, comfortable room with wainscoting and dark beams. In the center of the room under a hanging-lamp stood an old, massive oak table; against the wall beside the stove of brick, around which ran a wooden seat, hung an empty book-shelf; it had yet to be filled. Several maps, a couple of pictures, representations from Roman history, a desk and a bed completed the furniture. But the table contained a veritable Christmas store of games, soldiers, books, the whole wreathed with fir-branches. This was the room which little Friedrich Adami was to occupy; at the first glance it could be seen that hope and love had furnished it.

Fraulein Riekchen's heart almost ceased beating when the bell without was rung. Old Dora, who had been in service in the family just when Riekchen was forced to part with her lover, and who, now a widow, at the fraulein's request had accepted the position of housekeeper in the enlarged household, although, she firmly maintained she could not work so well any more, ran, as quickly as her old feet would carry her down the stairs to the door, while her mistress remained up-stairs as if paralyzed and saw but one thing: a slender, fair-haired boy crossing the court, and holding the doctor's hand.

Her feet trembled. Like a decrepit woman she dragged herself to the door of the room and out into the hall, where she leaned gasping against the balusters. "My boy," she whispered with emotion, "my darling, poor boy, welcome!" She drew the supple form of the slender boy to her, gazed in his face, pressed her lips upon the fair head, and bright tears from her eyes fell upon the curly, thick hair, the same hair as his father's. "Your name is Friedrich, like your father's? Did you want to come to me? I long to love you, Friedrich—you understand me, you speak German?"

With some embarrassment he freed himself from the strange lady's arms. "Yes!" said he, looking past her, "but Italian is prettier."

The doctor laughed in confusion. "Oscar," he called out, "are you not coming?"

For several minutes from the landing place had been heard the persuasive voice of a man. "Yes! Yes!" cried the same voice, "the little rascal is sitting here on the stairs and cannot be induced to go any farther. Well, then come, you piece of obstinacy," he continued, "I will carry you!"

Then followed the cry of a frightened child, and soon after at a turning in the stairs appeared a man with a broad-brimmed hat, bearing in his arms a strange, little creature. It lay in them like a doll, its head bent, its eyes half-closed, a defiant expression about its mouth and its fists clenched.

"Where shall the little lady's introduction take place?" asked the doctor's brother, the sculptor, Oscar Kortum, jocularly; "it will probably be best for me to bring her in at once, else the shy bird may again begin to beat its wings on the threshold."

Fraulein Riekchen opened the door of the boy's room, and there the artist stood upon two tiny feet, a very droll, little creature; from an odd, gayly-striped shawl which was wrapped around her form, a pale face surrounded by a mass of dark, curly hair, looked forth. Motionlessly the small personage, thoroughly foreign, stood there; the only things that stirred about her were the large, gold rings in her pretty ears.

"Go to the lady and give her your hand," said the sculptor in Italian. But the two brown hands were tightly clasped, the lips compressed and two large, dark eyes looked timidly from beneath their long lashes at the tall lady who still had her arms around her brother. "Come to me, little girl," said Riekchen. But her voice did not sound as it had when she addressed the brother. "Come, my child, what is your name?"

"Julia," replied the boy in her stead, "Julia, like mamma."

"Come here, Julia!" Riekchen Trautmann spoke impatiently and commandingly, her face was suddenly overspread by a deep crimson flush. And when the child silently drew back, she drew her toward her, and kneeling down before her, took her by the shoulders and looked in the thin pale little face beneath the tangled locks.

"Not a trace of *him*—strange, strange!" said the heart, and every tender feeling vanished. "This is *her* child, the child of the one who possessed the happiness which should have been mine in the sight of God and men!" She could find no loving word for the trembling girl; almost violently she pushed her away and rose.

"Dora," cried she to the old servant, "lay off her warm wraps and take her over to her room." Then she turned again to the boy who stood beside the table and with sparkling eyes examined the treasures placed there for him.

"These are yours, Friedrich—look at them and then we will eat. If you please, gentlemen—"she stepped to the door, "in the meantime, will you enter my sitting-room, and allow me to thank you, Herr Oskar Kortum, for the great service you have done me.

The brothers hastily exchanged glances. The younger sighed. "I am sorry for the little girl," he murmured, so that the elder only understood him.

"Wait a while!" consoled the other.

* * * * * *

Meanwhile Frau Minna was working in the kitchen; as the maid was assisting with the wash, she to-day prepared the meal. The odor of the roast meat from the upper story, where the dcotor and the "airy" sculptor from Florence, who had bronght the "good-for-nothing things," were dining did not improve her humor. And when Fritz looked into the kitchen and asked, if he really might not eat up-stairs—Aunt Riekchen had invited him again—she was thoroughly exasperated. "I don't care!" she cried, flinging a cover so violently on the bubbling meat-pot that it resounded like janizacy music. She then hastened into the wash-house, and not one article was washed to suit her; there followed severe censure and bitter words, and finally she seated herself in her kitchen apron in the arm-chair at the window and resolved to have her own sister interdicted for extravagance and unaccountableness.

"And two at once! Two at once!" she muttered;

"the second is utterly superfluous. It is a sin and a shame—one might die on that account!"

Just at this moment above her resounded a child's scream, yelling and ill-natured, as Frau Roettger said; then Riekchen's voice, louder than it had ever been heard in this house, and now the listener distinguished Dora's high voice. "Well, that is fine!" said Frau Minna to herself. "Heavens, when I recall what a face Riekchen made if my boy screamed once!" Suddenly all grew silent, but Luischen, with sleeves rolled up and a wet apron, entered her mistress' room. "Did madam hear?" she asked eagerly.

"Of course, I am not deaf!"

"Ah, how frightened I was! I shall have to grow accustomed to it! The little one, the girl, is said to be so naughty; Katie from up-stairs, says she turned blue with stubbornness."

"You should attend to your wash!"

"I am going, madam, but I never heard anything like it, that a child should become so savage when kindness is shown it. It is too bad about the new doll, Katie just put the pieces on the dust-pile."

Frau Roettger looked out of the window, and Luischen retired; but she heard the lady fold her hands and say: "Great God, what a burden, what a burden! What a good-for-nothing thing!"

On this day from Fraulein Trautmann's cozy bedroom peace had flown. At midnight she still paced up and down, her every nerve quivered. She took the candle and crept to the boy's room; he was not asleep, he lay with open eyes, gazing at his new surroundings.

"Go to sleep, my boy," she whispered, and bending over him she put back the locks which lay upon his

white, finely-shaped forehead as saucily as they had upon his father's.

"Yes, aunt!"

"Do you like it here?" she asked tenderly.

"Oh yes!—Fritz and I want to buy some rabbits to-morrow. He says if I want to, you will allow it."

She was silent.

"Is it not so, you will allow it?" he asked, throwing both arms around her neck and drawing her down to him.

A "No!" was on her tongue, for a short while before she had refused her nephew that request, but the "No!" was changed to a "Yes!" under the influence of the boy's affection. She was conscious of her weakness and she trembled for herself.

"Now go to sleep!"

"Yes, aunt!"

She next went to the little girl's bed. The child lay in the tiny white bed fast asleep, her mouth drooping bitterly, her fists clenched. Old Dora slept soundly among her piled-up pillows. Friederike placed the light on a table and stood with arms hanging at her sides and bowed head before this child. What a miserable character held sway within that fragile body! Her heart still quivered at the thought of the scene of the forenoon. Joyously had the boy shown his sister his treasures, and the girl had glanced at them with astonished eyes, without stirring. Then Riekchen had held toward her a doll, a very plain, common doll, which Katie in great haste had fetched from the nearest shop for a few groschens. because they had not even thought of a girl's toys. But the little one did not take it; as she had done that morning she put her hands behind her back and looked

contemptuously from the gay caricature to the small puppet show with which the boy was playing. Then Rieckhen impatiently took the doll and pressed it forcibly into the defiant, little creature's arms—when something unexpected occurred. The child's hands seized the bright doll and flung it so violently upon the ground that the porcelain head broke into a thousand pieces. An angry glance was cast upon the startled donor, and the small personage with an inimitably haughty gesture turned her back to her. A foreign, terrible sensation bubbled up in Riekchen's heart; she seized the child and led her severely into the room in which she was to sleep, and there—how could she be so furious?—there she struck the naughty, brown hands, until loud shrieks were uttered, tearless, terrible shrieks, which made her ears ring. Dora at length succeeded in quieting the little culprit.

She had been too severe, Riekchen honestly confessed and yet she was not prepared to extend her hand to touch the tiny, childish face caressingly. Suddenly she fell beside the bed and clung tearfully to the posts. "Lord," she sobbed, "what a burden, what a heavy burden you have imposed upon me! Help me—my heart turns from this child, I do not understand myself any longer!"

And she wept, until the old woman awoke. "Yes, yes, the child is a great trial, a great trial, Fraulein—but, you know, only kindness and patience will be of any avail."

At this moment the "great trial" talked in her sleep: "*Mama mia, mia carissima mama*!" It sounded as sweet, as soft, as if a bird were twittering in its sleep. Riekchen gazed upon the child's face—it smiled; how charming it looked!"

Ah, if she had smiled thus—and again the tears gushed from her eyes and she left the room hastily, for now she could not look at her charge as she should.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TWO FAMILIES.

A great trial was what every one considered the strange little girl who had entered the house so unwished for and so unexpected, to none a greater trial than to her foster-mother, the least of a trial to old Dora. At the sight of her "Aunt's" tall form the child hastily fled to some corner like those pretty lizards which sun themselves among the ruins of Rome. Nothing, neither kindness or severity, aroused her from her apathy. Frau Roettger was likewise horrified at the gipsy-like creature, and described her to her friends in such terms that they were surprised one day to see her tripping to school with old Dora quite a human-looking being; they fancied her as black as a Moor with woolly hair.

The child was wonderfully attached to her work in school, it was even difficult to induce her to go home, although when there she usually sat rigidly in her seat, her eyes fixedly upon her teacher, regardless of her companions. Dora occupied with her the tiny chamber in which there was just room for two beds, a sewing table and the child's corner. Of all in the house, the old woman was the only one who knew how to manage "Julchen." To be sure, the little one was always deaf when she was called "Julchen;" on being addressed thus, she was in the habit of remaining motionlessly in her seat. But did the old

woman make up her mind to call "Julia," in as soft a tone as her rough voice could speak it, the child obeyed immediately.

Julia seemed to feel the happiest in this corner, and when from the adjoining room, aunt's dressing-room, came the tones of a violin, a smile flitted across the grave little face and her hands were clasped ecstatically, while she listened at the door.

"You like Fritz?" asked Dora, when the girl flattened her dainty nose against the window-pane and with serious eyes watched the wild boys playing in the garden. But she received no answer.

"Do you love your brother very dearly?" asked the woman.

"Not so very!" replied the strange child.

"Well, at least you are candid, almost as much so as Frau Roettger—upon whom may God have mercy!" And Dora recalled the fact, as she spoke, that this lady never gave the odd intruder any other name than "Miss Good-for-nothing!"

At length the servants too used this name, as did the two boys, who had formed a strong friendship.

Frau Minna suffered this friendship, for although Riekchen's blind partiality for fair-haired Friedrich knew no bounds, she was yet so just toward her nephew, that she allowed him to share all the privileges she accorded her foster-son.

Friedrich Adami, or as Aunt Riekchen called him, "Frieder," gradually became master in the house, everything was arranged to suit him; only one glance of the boyish blue eyes was sufficient for his aunt, and his wish was granted. His youth was one long blissful day. Riekchen could not even correct his misdemeanors, his poor school-reports, his teacher's com-

plaints; she constantly found excuses for him, and the most she did, was to summon him to her room, and to implore with tears in her eyes: "Frieder, promise me it shall not happen again!" Which promise he readily gave, to forget it in the course of half an hour.

Frieder was looked upon as one of the worst boys in the whole town. The doctor shook his head sadly when he returned home at night from the tavern "Zur Traube," where too the teachers of the gymnasium drank their wine, and frequently he said to his wife: "This is a woman's discipline, what will come of it!"

"You should interfere as guardian," replied the latter. But he thought he could not do that, for as yet nothing had occurred to warrant interference on his part. It was fortunate that through all those long years Aunt Riekchen had not used the interest on her money and that she was now in a position to indulge her Frieder's desires. The boy was vain, he had to have everything very fine. Frau Roettger called it "affectation," and her Fritz notwithstanding all complaints and prayers obtained only mended garments for every day; while Rieckhen excused Frieder's leaning toward elegance with the love of the beautiful, which he had inherited from his father who was an artist.

Ah, she loved the handsome boy, loved him as only a heart can love which has thirsted for years, so anxiously tender, so passionately blind, that she saw and was interested in nothing but the son of the deeply-mourned, truly loved man. It afforded her a painful yet sweet delight to seek resemblances in his face, as well as thoughts, expressions, gestures, and rapturously she clasped the boy in her arms as she dis-

covered them. She had in her possession a small bust of his father; a friend of his, a young sculptor, had once modeled it; during all the years of separation it had stood upon her sewing table as the greatest treasure of her solitude. There were moments when Frieder resembled this handsome head, as if he had served for model—and she loved these features which filled her heart so entirely that there was no room within it for the little reserved "Miss Good-for-nothing" who was so unlike her brother! The child liked her as little, the aversion was mutual, she thought; nor did the girl ever mention her father, she was generally very taciturn. But she was deprived of nothing, Riekchen surely desired only her good.

The children had been in the house two years when a change took place. Frieder and Fritz at first began to treat one another coldly, then openly hostile, and one day the rupture came which involved the sympathies of the entire household and made such an irremediable schism in their friendship, that from henceforth "up-stairs' and "downstairs" were separated like two hostile camps, while even the servants took sides for "their" boys.

It was a sultry day on which that happened, a veritable day of misfortune from the outset. Fraulein Riekchen awoke with a headache. Old Dora then informed her that Miss Good-for-nothing had outgrown her last summer's dresses so, that new ones would have to be obtained, and Riekchen, to whom nothing for Frieder was too much, sighed deeply. Below in the hall Frau Roettger was quarreling with the gardener, for the snails had destroyed the young peas in the vegetable beds, the man disrespectfully replied he had not created the insects, to which remark he re-

ceived a still sharper answer, which had the effect of calling forth another angry retort and finally he was threatened by the exasperated woman with immediate dismissal.

Fraulein Riekchen terrified at this dispute descended the stairs; she disliked strife. Her sister, who was just going up-stairs, met her on the landing of the broad staircase and in great agitation began to complain that she had had enough of the old, gruff—when the house door flew open and both boys rushed in. Frau Roettger's words died upon her lips, for the door was closed noisily, and the next instant the boys' school knapsacks were flung into a corner and they fell upon one another like fighting-cocks.

It all happened so quickly that the two women scarcely knew how the angry combatants, who struggled on the floor and in dumb fury struck each other, had come there. Breathless silence reigned for several seconds, then there was a heavy fall and Fritz said hoarsely: "So, you Roman dog, you have your reward!" And Frieder lay pale upon the floor, his face distorted by rage and shame. The other rushed into the corner, seized his knapsack and was about to go into the garden, when Aunt Riekchen stood before him.

"What are you thinking of, you miserable boy!" she cried, "How could you raise your coarse fists against one weaker than yourself! Go—I never want to hear anything more of you—never!"

The robust boy looked at her calmly: his breath came quickly, he was still excited, but not for a moment did he forget to whom he was speaking.

"You do not know the reason, aunt," said he, turning and disappearing through the back door.

But Frau Minna conducted herself like a heroic mother. "Well, I do not blame the boy, he has suffered enough lately," she declared with composure.

"What?" cried Riekchen, who was now trembling, "do you take your bad boy's part—are you not ashamed? Have you entirely forgotten how dearly I always loved Fritz and that I had to expect some consideration for the poor, fatherless child? You must punish your son—severely—I ask you to do so."

"I have no idea of it!" replied her sister. "Punish your own, Fritz is evidently not to blame."

"Come!" Aunt Riekchen turned to Frieder who had just risen and was examining his torn coat-sleeve, "come! If other boys behave common, you have no right to do so likewise. Go up to your room; I am seriously angry."

So the couple ascended the stairs; Frau Roettger fetched her son from the garden, and examinations were made up-stairs and down, but in both cases without results.

"Mother," said Fritz, "do not ask me anything more; Frieder is a very bad boy."

Frieder could illy conceal a certain confusion behind assumed magnanimity. "Don't, Aunt, he meant no harm."

Aunt Riekchen, outwardly still angry, inwardly touched, sought her sitting-room. "He has aristocratic feelings," said she, "and boys often fight. He will not tell me the cause, that is noble." Nevertheless she informed him that as his punishment he should this day eat alone in his room, and not leave the same until he had come to ask pardon. She felt she must be strict for once.

She did not see her foster-son's grimaces as she

turned her back. Friedrich Adami clenched his fists when she had disappeared. Was it not absurd of her to put him there? Bah! He *need* not to obey, he would simply go into the garden; he would pay up the coarse rascal downstairs with the big fists. What mattered it to *him*, if the white rabbit ran into his partition, instead of remaining in the stupid fellow's, and how was it, that immediately after this dispute he palpably took his aunt's part? He, Friedrich Adami could call her whatever he liked. Of course —if Fritz were to tell that he had called his foster-mother "an old frump" with whom he could do what he wanted, for she had become foolishly fond of him —it would be extremely disagreeable.

He was on the point of escaping to the garden when the door opened and old Dora appeared with his food.

"Frieder," said she, "what have you been doing? Vexing your kind aunt? You are not worthy that she should love you so. There see; with her own hand she fetched you this quince jam from the store-room."

About the handsome boy's lips trembled a mocking smile. As a punishment she sent him his favorite dainty! He was right in what he said! He gave up his resolutions to go into the garden and seated himself at the table with a large appetite.

"Apologize to her afterward," warned the old woman.

"I have nothing to apologize for!" he replied.

"Then you cannot come down."

"I shall come if I want to—but I do not want to."

Evening came. The storm-clouds had dispersed, it was cooler out-of-doors. Friedrich Adami awaited

his aunt, his aunt awaited him, neither wished to yield. The boy stood at the window; below, Fritz was going into the rabbit-hutch, he was whistling gayly; he was better off. Now probably he was taking back his possession, the pretty white rabbit, and making the door doubly secure that it would not yield again. Across the court came a moist, bracing breeze, no doubt from the Rhine; the boy inhaled it. Just to-day he felt more attracted than ever toward the stream, that he might stretch his aching limbs in the green, clear flood.

Well, why should he not humor the "old lady" by begging her pardon? He took his straw-hat and stole over to the sitting-room.

His aunt was not there, instead in the midst of the rosy light of the setting sun, which filled magically the deep window-niche, stood his sister on a chair before their aunt's sewing table; she had both arms firmly against the wall, so that she almost embraced the small console upon which was her father's bust. The dark, little head was bent forward and her red lips touched tenderly the brow of the inanimate face. There lay in the little one's manner a shy, sweet affection, which would have moved anyone.

It is not expected of brothers in general, especially of young brothers, that they shall admire their sisters; but that this heroic brother should employ his hand to push the little girl's head so violently against the plaster cast that by the clash it fell from the console upon the floor and broke, was not to be excused even by the lack of feeling in brothers.

"Stupid thing!" cried he, startled himself, "what have you done now!"

At this moment Aunt Riekchen entered. The girl

motionless with fright still stood upon the chair, the pale face was strangely rigid, and the woman, who could be kindness itself, was goaded almost to cruelty by the sight of her broken treasure.

"You horrible, mischievous child!" she exclaimed, "did you come here only to bring me misfortune? Would to God I had never seen you!" She snatched the trembling child from the chair and pushed her away, so that the tiny form fell at the door powerless.

Dora raised her. Silently, trembling the child lay in her arms, while a drop of blood trickled from her beautifully-arched upper lip.

"Julchen, dear Julchen!" implored the old woman tearfully, after having laid her charge upon her bed and having washed off the blood, "what have you done? For God's sake tell me!"

But no word of complaint passed the lips contracted with pain.

Aunt Riekchen did not want to see her, she had said, and, too, she should go to bed hungry! And so the child sat there, while below in the garden under the nut-trees, sat her brother, again restored to favor, supping by the side of his aunt, so she sat there in the twilight at the window, her eyes fixed upon the river, with an expression sad beyond her years, and listened to the nightingales warbling below, and to the gentle ripple of the stream. From time to time on the opposite shore gleamed a flash of lightning, enveloping the garden in a red light. All alone she sat there, for Dora had gone to see her married step-daughter.

Was she angry or cold? She could not have told. She only yearned for kindness, for love, for a caressing word, she yearned so deeply. But no one, no one

cared for her. Just then the door creaked slightly and some one stole in softly. "Here!" said the low voice of Fritz, who up to this time had scarcely deigned to glance at her, "here, little Good-for-nothing, Luischen says you have had nothing to eat to-night—" The tall boy stooped and laid a sandwich in the child's lap. "Do not cry, Good-for-nothing," he stammered, "eat!"

She was not weeping but she did not eat either; she continued to stare at the door through which the boy had disappeared; her tiny heart throbbed violently and a flood of warmth rushed over her. As a ray of sunshine benefits the bud which has scarcely dared to come forth, so had the lonely, childish heart been benefitted by these few awkward words, and a spark was kindled in the timid soul, which was one day to grow into a powerful blaze. And when at night Miss Good-for-nothing's hands were clasped in prayer, the name of "Fritz" was murmured by her lips, as it was in all of her prayers after that.

From this time Aunt Riekchen treated the "mischievous child" more coldly. "Up-stairs" and "downstairs" were not on good terms; "good morning" and "good night" were exchanged by the sisters, to be sure, but their rupture was complete. The boys went to school alone and returned alone—they were not in the same class, for Frieder took time for his studies, while Fritz learned quicker. And so, separately, the adults proceeded toward the autumn of their lives, the youths toward the spring-time; suddenly they were in the midst of this spring-time, and the children had become adults.

CHAPTER V.

NO MORE DARKNESS IN THE WORLD.

It is indeed a day of delight on which a maiden attains her eighteenth year; it possesses a peculiar charm, especially if the day falls at the end of May, when all the rose-buds are about to open, when the Rhine flows past the rose-garden, and the perfume of flowers fills the air. One can picture to one's self the child, as she, with glowing eyes and in a white dress flits through the garden and, filled with pure delight in life, longs to embrace everyone.

Such may be the case—but it was not so with Miss Good-for-nothing on the May day on which she was eighteen. She awoke very early, but with no different sensations; no trace of joyful expectation was to be seen upon her face.

The tiny room was now hers alone; Frau Dora was no longer in the house, she lived in apartments somewhere in town, her services were no longer required. "Julchen" was grown-up, the young master away from home, so Aunt Riekchen dismissed the old woman and kept only one maid, a young girl of fifteen. Julia must learn to keep house.

The maiden was not at all surprised to-day that no myrtle-bush, no bouquet was at her bedside, that no loving face bent over hers, no loving voice said: "God bless you, darling!" As usual she made her toilet, opened the window, inhaled the morning air, while

she braided her long, blue-black hair, the curly locks of former days, and which she now twisted into a simple knot at the back of her head. She had grown tall and slender, yet her form was well developed; she looked still more foreign than she had as a child; she probably resembled her mother. Her nose was slightly arched, her brow low, her chin round and firm, the whole lighted up by two glittering dark eyes, in which, as Frau Roettger expressed herself, "something shimmered, something—well, one could see *what*, did the long lashes veil them ever so carefully."

Her attire was extremely simple. Aunt Ricekhen considered it advisable to mitigate her striking appearance as much as possible. A light-blue cotton dress, over it an apron which the girl had made as dainty as she was permitted to, constituted her birthday toilet. How could it be any different, when, in celebration of the day a large washing was to be done? Her treasured ear-rings had long since been taken from her, but to this day Julia mechanically raised her hand to the tip of her ear when perplexed, as she had formerly been in the habit of doing, when at such times she turned the rings around, until her aunt rapped her fingers. To-day she looked in the mirror a little longer than usual, and when it struck seven o'clock, she hastened to the kitchen to see to breakfast, waiter in hand, she entered the sitting-room where Aunt Riekchen sat at the open window and looked toward her with a pale face which had aged considerably.

"Good morning, Aunt!" said the young girl.

"Good morning, Julia!" was the measured reply.

The girl filled the cups and set the chair in place. "If you please, Aunt, breakfast is ready."

Fraulein Reickhen advanced. "I congratulate you, my child," said she, touching the girl's brow with her lips. "Here is a trifle for you." She thrust a package into her hand. "Be very careful with it, you know—"

A deep sigh closed this speech, and Riekchen leaned back in her chair and stirred the contents of her cup.

A flush of joy flitted over the girl's face. "Thank you, dear Aunt—may I do what I like with the money?" she asked without raising her eyes.

"Yes, provided that it is nothing absurd; that is—I hoped you would save it," was the reply.

Miss Good-for-nothing was silent, but her pleasure in the gift had vanished.

"To-day, toward evening," continued her aunt, "when the wash is off the lines, you must go to the dressmaker's, she must alter a white dress for you. I wore it when a girl. The doctor's wife intends inviting you to the Whitsuntide party; at eighteen you have a right to the enjoyments of youth."

"Ah, Aunt," objected the young girl, "let me remain at home, I do not know the people, and—"

"If I only knew, Julia, why you are so haughty and reserved. You will go! I wish it, if only that they shall not say I allow you to do nothing and treat you as a step-child."

The girl said no more. She filled the old lady's cup a second time and prepared to leave the room.

"I pray you to see that the wash is not so celestially blue as it was last time!" Fraulein Riekchen called after her and then she drew an unopened letter from the pocket of her gray dress; before she broke the seal she took a deep breath and the color came and went in her cheeks.

In the hall below stood all sorts of furniture, and

Frau Roettger's maid, as well as the frau herself beat clouds of dust from the brown rep cushions. The doors of two rooms, those of the young master, to whom these stiff birch chairs and sofa belonged, were wide open, and the char-woman scrubbed the floor with a zeal which led one to conclude that she stood in awe of Frau Roettger who unremittingly watched her work. The young girl's "Good morning!" died away in the din of the beating; Frau Minna had neither eye nor ear for her, and Miss Good-for-nothing could begin her birthday celebration at once.

"If you would like to put the tablecloths and napkins in the water right away," said the old washerwoman, "I will help carry the basket." In a few minutes the stream was reached.

A narrow, rather steep footpath alone separated the garden from the river bank. Andersheim was not one of those places of the magnificent Rhine, in which the objectionable railway passes between stream and gardens; this railroad ran back of the town, and on the water, especially in front of Trautmann's garden, it was as idyllic as at the time when edge-rails and steam-cars belonged to the realm of unknown things. Steps led down to the stream, at their base lay the old skiff in the shade of the nut-trees whose branches overhung the garden wall, as if they wished to see their reflections in the delightful, clear, green flood.

Julia drew in the skiff, entered it, took the basket with the wash, and when the old woman had disappeared, stood for a while idly there and looked over the broad, glittering surface toward the meadow on the other side, over which hung a light, bluish mist. How delightful was this morning! The stream rushed along so solemnly, the golden rays of the sun danced

so merrily upon the thousands of tiny waves, the air was so fragrant—the young creature's heart expanded and her eyes grew moist, involuntarily she clasped her hands. "If one were not so alone," she murmured, then, too, in her dreamy eyes gleamed a couple of golden rays like two blessed stars, and she smiled, as she kneeled in the bow of the boat and indolently dipped a cloth in the water.

Again she paused and stared dreamily before her, a melancholy expression about her mouth, an expression which strangely changed her face; she now uttered a slight exclamation—the cloth had escaped from her fingers and was floating down the stream.

"Great God!" said the terrified child, "and it is the damask coffee-cloth with the adages interwoven!"

She leaned forward, as far as possible, a stick in her hand, as if that could avail anything; then again she stood erect and with eyes wide-open, looked over at a boat which a sailor was propelling along the shore up the stream, and at the form of a man who was fishing up the cloth with the boat hook.

"Hello!" cried a deep voice, "I should not have been surprised if Miss Good-for-nothing had committed the heroic act of immersing herself to save a poor, imperilled piece of linen. So, it is really you, Good-for-nothing?"

The skiff was now quite close alongside the other one, a tall, broad-shouldered man was standing in it. His hat was raised above his brown head in greeting, while his other hand still held the boat-hook with the cloth attached. His eyes were fixed with undisguised astonishment on the girl who, her face pale with agitation, made a peculiarly charming picture standing in the skiff which swayed slightly.

"Indeed," said he finally, "I cannot doubt that it is you, Good-for-nothing Who in all the town would have such black hair and such eyes, and who else could stand there so proudly and with such classic composure but Julia Adami of Rome? How? You are washing on your eighteenth birthday? But that is classical too, child; in ancient times it was, I believe, the favorite occupation of the princes' daughters—" he threw the cloth in the bow of the boat, in which the girl stood, and swung himself over. "How do you do, again, Julia, my congratulations on your birthday!"

She slowly gave him a small, trembling hand, but her eyes did not meet his. They were still standing thus, when the man, who had rowed young Doctor Fritz Roettger thither, went down the stream; *she* with downcast eyes, *he* gazing at her in surprise.

Julia and Fritz were suddenly startled from their absorption by the passing of a steamer and by the violent disturbance of the water which caused the skiff to oscillate. The doctor laughed loudly and heartily. "See, Miss Good-for-nothing, you came near sharing the same fate as the poor cloth and I should have had to fish you out too. But tell me, child, what have you been doing with yourself during the past two years? You have grown half an ell and where is your thin, litttle face? You are—" The compliment died upon his tongue, for she blushed a rosy red.

"Two years are a long time," said she, resuming her work. "But where have you come from?"

"Splash the water about some other time and sit down now! You are eternally washing at home, I can imagine nothing else. Where have I come from?

From Berlin, that is this morning from Andersheim, yesterday from Cologne; and in order to surprise you, I came in the boat, to reach the house unseen."

"I believe your mother does not expect you until the evening of the Whitsuntide festival," said she.

"Yes, that may be; but Berlin suddenly became too unbearable. I had nothing more to do there, I left, and here I am, as you see."

"Shall you stay here?" was the hesitating inquiry.

"Possibly; I have promised mother. Perhaps the honest citizens of Andersheim will put faith in me and commit their mortal bodies in sickness to my care."

"Do you not want to go in and see your mother?"

"No! I am very well satisfied here, and mother will tremble in every limb, as she expresses it, soon enough. Tell me, rather, how are matters with you?"

She had, in spite of his remonstrances, resumed her washing. "Just the same," said she, as several drops lighted on her hair and lay there like glittering stones.

He remained silent and watched her. What an odd girl Miss Good-for-nothing had become and what a despondent ring there was in her words: "Just the same!" He felt depressed; was he to share the "Just the same!" for his entire life?

"Good-for-nothing," he implored, trying to exercise his thoughts, "leave that washing, surely the maid can do it; it is horrible! Enjoy your young life!" He suddenly drew her upon the seat beside him and put his arm around her. "You used always to give me a kiss when I came home, do you remember? And when I went away too. To-day, on your birthday, I must give *you* one!" And before she realized what was taking place, he had pressed his handsome brown mustache on her rosy lips.

She quickly freed herself and looked at him. For an instant the golden gleams in the dark eyes sparkled strangely, then her lids fell and an expression of vexation became visible upon her face. "Pray, cease, I am no longer a child," said she.

"No offense, Miss Good-for-nothing!" He rose and leaped nimbly from the boat, from the shore he bowed low and ascended the steps. "It is only that mother may quickly kill the fatted calf, Good-for-nothing—until we meet again!"

She gazed after him, all the color had vanished from her face. She sat there powerlessly, suddenly she put her hands to her eyes as if the sun and the play of the waves dazzled them, and she was still sitting thus, when the old woman brought the second basket of clothes.

The young doctor rushed into his mother's sitting-room just at a time he would not have chosen, had he had any suspicions of what was taking place there. There like one who was chilly stood his mother at the fireless stove, for it as summer, with a flushed, angry face, while at the window sat Aunt Riekchen, very pale, a letter in her hand.

"You, Fritz?" exclaimed his mother, as she saw him. "Well, that is fortunate, you have come opportunely!" And after a hasty kiss the agitated woman drew him to his aunt's chair. "Now tell her, Fritz, she does not believe me."

"How do you do, aunt! What is it you do not again believe?" he asked good-naturedly.

"That Frieder is a—a—profligate—to be plain!" cried Frau Roettger.

Aunt Reikchen looked at her stately nephew like a wounded doe. "Mercy, Fritz, mercy!" said her tearful eyes.

"Unfortunately I can tell you nothing of Frieder, Aunt," said the young physician in a kind, grave voice, "I scarcely ever meet him on the street. You may not be able to understand it, but in such a large city, where every one has his own road to travel, why—"

"I am sorry, Fritz, that you still avoid each other."

"Aunt, that is in the natural course of events. Officers hold themselves—must hold themselves exclusive; it is not done purpoesly by either of us," he comforted.

"You need not pretend that you do not know how Herr Adami plays the lord!" said the mother with her delightful candor. "Ladies, dinners, suppers in the finest places! If *he* does not know it, *I* can tell you, Riekchen, it is so! Do not any longer refuse to believe the fact and shorten your son's allowance, or what I predicted eight yeas ago when the boy ran up the large account at the confectioner's, will come to pass—I told you then, you would yet leave this house a beggar."

"I pray you," exclaimed Aunt Rieckhen indignantly, "do not bring up the long since forgotten matter. Moreover, I will intrude no longer, as we cannot agree. I am very glad to see you, Fritz, and wish you God's richest blessings," she said to the young doctor, then she hastily left the room, that her relatives might not see the tears which gushed from her eyes.

Frau Roettger looked after her. "Stubborn to the last!" cried she.

"What did aunt want, dear mother?" he questioned.

"What did she want? Money! A mortgage on the house!"

"Great God, has it gone so far?" he asked with genuine sorrow.

"Long ago! Two years ago I gave her three thousand dollars on the house. She is so afraid that outsiders will find out her affairs. To-day she came to me again for another loan. It is a pity! She has not enough now to cover the expenses of her more than simple household; she saves in every way, they al most starve. The good servant has been discharged, and Fraulein Julia has to work. That is just it, if she did not have her, she could eat at my table, I would be pleased to have her. But 'Good-for-nothing' is there and has to be maintained like a princess."

The young doctor laughed. "Do the princesses of to-day wash clothes in the Rhine?"

"Well, do not laugh too soon. Riekchen has just told me that from now on the 'young lady' will attend the Casino fetes."

"Why not?"

"Good heavens, how much it will cost! Why the clothes—"

"Never mind that. Can you not help aunt?"

"Certainly! I told her, I would buy the house; at a moderate price, to be sure. But what do you think she wants, it is simply absurd! I told her she could have her rooms free, the use of the garden—but she insists upon the sum. It would be terrible, were it to fall into other hands," continued the old lady with a sigh, "it is so well-situated for your purpose—the new town with its villas and their aristocratic occupants so near by. Only *one* way would be endurable, if Herr Krautner next door would buy it."

She paused. "You will have to marry, Fritz; an unmarried doctor is a nonentity. So a wife is the most necessary thing for you at present."

The tall, handsome man burst into a loud lugh.

"Mother, do you know what is the most necessary thing?" he cried. "Breakfast!"

Then for the first time did the old lady realize that her son, whom she had not seen for two years, had surprised her and was there, really and truly. She ran actively to and fro and brought in what the larder and cellar had to offer, as she did so excusing herself that unfortunately his rooms were not in order. And as at length she sat there and watched him eat, she said once more: "It is really necessary, Fritz, that you look about for a wife; what paterfamilias would summon you, a bachelor, to attend his wife and his daughters? We might this afternoon—"

"Well, what might we do?" he asked gayly.

"Pay a few calls, at Eisemann's and Krautner's perhaps—"

"Is there such haste?"

"If people are neighbors and talk across the hedge in the evening—and Thereschen, too, frequently sits with us in the arbor—"

"Is that so? Thereschen? Who is that?"

"Herr Krautner's daughter; Julchen and Thereschen are friendly, they are of one ago. Were I in Riekchen's place I would not allow it, for the girl only learns how rich folks live, but—what is it my business! Tell me, do you really know nothing of Frieder?"

"Mother," replied the young man, "do not ask me about him; talking will do no good. I am only sorry for those two up-stairs."

"Tell me! Tell me!" cried his mother, but he did not hear her. He must see to his luggage, he called out to her.

When the home-returning son fancied that the customary roast of veal would be served at dinner in his

honor, he made a mistake. There was nothing but the usual meal on cleaning and washing days "and therewith avast!" as Frau Roettger said. Well, he was no glutton and he ate the sweet and sour liver balls. But, whether it was owing to the smell of the scrubbing or to the fact that he could not enter his still damp room to see it to rights until toward evening—he felt exceedingly uncomfortable.

His mother was enjoying her afternoon siesta in the sitting-room, and up-stairs could be heard the grinding of a coffee-mill. He stepped to the door of his future study How bare it was! Well, when his books and instruments were once unpacked, then—but, great heavens, where should he put them? There was no cupboard for them! Suddenly it occurred to him that there must be in the garret the bookshelves out of his late grandfather's office, and smoking a cigar he leisurely ascended the stairs, crept softly across the hall, that he might not disturb his grieved aunt's nap, and climbed the steep attic-stairs.

Such snug attics filled with all sorts of lumber, such solid beams and such mysterious twilight in which spiders weave their webs and old, feudal generations of mice live in constant fear of the cat, are no longer to be found in new-fashioned houses in which every corner is put to use by the occupants. The young doctor had always liked the attic from the time of his childhood, when they hid here, played cards in the most secluded corner and made their first attempts at smoking. Only up there did he begin to feel at home, and truly, there still hung the rope with which he had swung Miss Good-for-nothing, and there in the chimney-corner stood the old broken spinning-wheel, to turn which had been the little girl's silent delight.

He eagerly set about clearing out of the way all kinds of boxes, chairs and broken rubbish, in order to reach the book-shelves he was in search of, and which were beneath this heap of old stuff, at the same time soliloquizing softly: "It is not beautiful, but to begin with—later on, if I must marry, as mother says, new things can be obtained—"

At that moment he paused; the door of the dormer chamber opposite creaked, and turning quickly, he saw the door slowly close.

"Are there really ghosts here?" he cried, and with two bounds he was at the door and shook it—one shake, and the small hand which had held it on the inside gave way; Fritz stood before Miss Good-for-nothing.

"So it is you?" he said in surprise. "Do you still hide?"

"Oh please, go!" she besought in confusion. But he did not go.

"I shall see what you are doing up here," said he, crossing the threshold. Then he ceased—

In a corner, just under the blinking, sleepy-looking attic window, where old panes shimmered with all the colors of the rainbow, stood an old arm-chair with moth-eaten cushions at a table upon the surface of which were all the materials for water-color painting. A number of leather-cases, probably intended for postage-stamps, lay in a small basket, and half a dozen more already painted were placed there, like a row of soldiers, to dry. He took one of the boxes in his hand and examined it. The flying dove, carrying a note at its neck on a blue ribbon, seemed to have been painted with a few bold strokes; the position of the bird's wings were true to nature and notwith-

standing the hackneyed subject, it was pretty and original, although it betrayed a hand as yet unskilled.

He looked from the dove to the girl. She stood before him, impatient and pale, her teeth upon her under lip.

"I had no idea that you painted, Julia," said he, "but, for God's sake, how came you to this monotonous occupation? For whom? Why do you hatch doves by three-scores? Does Aunt Riekchen know it?"

"No one! Nor are you to know it—please, forget it!"

"But, Good-for-nothing, do not be so unkind," he implored. "I thought you knew from bygone days that we are good friends. Did I ever betray you? Indeed I am heartily glad that you do something besides washing; only this—" he pointed to the boxes, "wholesale manufacture is incomprehensible to me. Say, child, are you trading on your favorite occupation? Pocket-money—eh? Have you had instruction? You must surely have painted something else? Show it to me, please!" And he seized the old, worn-out portfolio from which paper peeped forth, paper, such as is used for water-colors.

"Leave it there!" she commanded with an angry glance, stamping her foot upon the floor. "It is only nonsense," she added, "good-for-nothing like myself. I once gave aunt a picture like it for a Christmas gift and—received a sharp rebuke for it. Instruction? Where should I obtain instruction? I would learn nothing anyway. That—" she pointed contemptuously to the leather boxes—"that I do—because—for my own especial amusement," she concluded, crossing her arms; at this moment she re-

sembled one of the haughtiest of the Romans, who thinks of dismissing her thrall, but not in mercy.

"I will tell you something, Julia," said he calmly, "you paint to earn money. But for whom? For whom?"

"For whom if not for myself, provided you were right?"

"I am afraid you—"

"Oh please, do not fear anything!" said she with sparkling eyes. "Moreover, I must now give the washerwoman her afternoon's luncheon."

"Very well! I will go too; pardon me for having annoyed you."

There probably was something in his tone which touched her.

"Do not be angry, Fritz," she besought suddenly, extending her right hand while she averted her face.

He took it compassionately in both of his. "Poor, little Miss Good-for-nothing!" It was the same gentle tone in which he had years before said to the child: "Do not cry, Good-for-nothing, eat!" She put her disengaged hand to her eyes, to hide her deep blush.

"Julia!" said he softly, drawing her to him. And the pretty, dark head lay upon his breast. "Child, you have not had an easy life all these years. But I am here now, and you must tell me everything, do you hear, everything that troubles you. I do not want you to be sad in the most beautiful time of your life. You have now as you had before I went to Gottingen, one to whom you can tell all."

She made no reply but she allowed him to stroke her hair. He too became silent and let her head rest upon his breast. It was so quiet up there, only the

wood-worm ticked in the old beams and Fritz Roett ger's heart throbbed so wildly, he thought its pulsations must be audible. Then slowly he raised the girl's face and gazed into her lovely half-closed, ardent eyes. For the second time that day he kissed her lips, but more passionately than before and the caress was longer, nor did she this time rebel. Her arms were entwined about his neck and a sound like a stifled cry of joy vibrated through the low room.

The next moment she was alone; she knelt before the old arm-chair, as if it were an altar, her hands clasped, her beautiful, proud face rapturously upturned. "Oh God," said she fervently, "I thank thee, there is no longer darkness in the world for me."

He stood below, looking somewhat depressed. "Nonsense!" he muttered, "old idiot, that I am! But, the deuce! I can surely kiss my so-called cousin? Hm—however, I wish it had not happened. Well, she will not attach any importance to it, it is to be hoped—Lord, that is only lacking!"

"Fritz!" called his mother's shrill voice, "I am ready —we will go to Krautner's."

He sighed and took his hat from the nail. "Poor, little Good-for-nothing" he murmured once more.

Toward evening Aunt Riekchen returned home from the doctor's. She crept along; the anxiety, which oppressed her, affected her step likewise. The air seemed to be filled with gold dust, the old gabled roofs of the town, the springs and the trees in the garden were flooded with the purple light of the setting sun. She saw not, she thought of nothing but of how she could obtain money. Suddenly, directly in front of her, from the arched door-way of a tiny house emerged a girl's form which walked so hastily.

What an elastic step and what a supple, slender figure, notwithstanding the poorly-made gown? What ailed Julia? Her feet almost danced and everyone turned to look after her or to stare under her round straw hat.

"Julchen!" cried the old lady; the girl turned and Fraulein Riekchen saw a youthful face upon which beamed a great, inward happiness. The sorrowful woman did not understand it, she saw only the bewitching beauty and that vexed her in recalling as it did past days.

"Walk sensibly!" she censured. The girl suited her pace to her aunt's. "Where were you, Julia?"

"At the dressmaker's, whither you bade me go, aunt. Only think, she says it will make a very pretty frock if I have a few red bows."

Her aunt made no reply. "Come to my bedroom tonight, I have some accounts to make up!" she said finally and then they walked on together.

At the courtyard door those from "below" and those from "above" met. "Well," Frau Roettger asked her sister, "did you get the money? I'll wager, the doctor has given it to you again—eh? You are lucky, Riekchen."

Aunt and niece sat up far into the May night and reckoned. The figures danced in front of the young girl's eyes; she made many mistakes and Aunt Riekchen grew momentarily more impatient and paler.

"Three thousand marks interest to pay and only four thousand five hundred income," she murmured; "one thousand of this Frieder receives—" Suddenly she extinguished the lamp and leaned back in her chair.

For a while all was in darknss, then the moonlight entered through the window, and from without came

the tones of the nightingale, from the small room the sound of a voice singing, "Julia!" shrilly broke the peaceful silence.

"Aunt?"

"It is difficult for me to tell you, but—I cannot keep you—you must go—you must help yourself. There is barely sufficient for me."

No reply.

"Julia, do you not hear? Come hither!"

She came and the old lady gazed into a set face.

"Did you understand me, child?"

"No!" It was like a whisper.

"Then I will speak plainer. Frieder has used more than I could give him. Everything is so different now in the world—I knew nothing of the position of an officer and I did not know what it involved when he was ordered to Berlin a year and a half ago. This much I do know, that I have scarcely enough to feed myself and that I cannot let you starve with me. You know something about housekeeping, and if you are not thorough, you will learn; at first you must be satisfied with small wages. I will put an advertisement for a place in the paper, there will probably be something at Johanni. I then must try to get along." Still no sound. "Well, Julia?" Suddenly the girl was before her on her knees.

"Let me starve with you, Aunt!" came half-audibly from her lips. "Oh, I beseech you! I pray you do not send me away, not now! I will work day and night, I can earn money here too—you do not believe it? Oh, yes, I have done so, I wanted to— Oh, aunt, aunt, let me stay here, I can not go away"

"You make the burden hard for me," murmured the lady.

"Aunt, we could rent rooms up here—I will work like a servant, I shall not care to go to balls and places of amusement, I will sit quietly in the garden, ah, only let me stay" As the old lady did not stir, she continued to struggle for her pinched, loveless home, in which during all the years of her young life she had learned to know only neglect and harshness; continued to implore, because it seemed worse to her than death to be separated from him who had been to her the sun of her life since that evening on which reviled and rebuked, hungry and alone she sat in her tiny room and he comforted her. "Aunt, dear Aunt. ' The fine, glowing eyes looked up with bewitching, imploring experssion at the lady who held the fate of her life in her hand.

"We will see—rise."

This was all that was given her as comfort, but it meant a great deal to the girl. She rose. "Thank you, Aunt, you shall never regret it!"

Then she disappeared like the moonbeam which a short while before played upon the floor.

The solitary woman at the window looked at the dark cloud which obscured the moon, and again her heart turned from the child in recalling her mother. Had she been able to implore thus? What a lack of womanly pride. If any one had bidden her, Riekchen Trautmann "Go"—she would not have uttered one word. But how could nobility of thought be expected in the daughter of the woman who had offered herself to her husband.

Julia flew down the garden path. What she wanted to do, she did not know herself; her quivering nerves sought quieting. She stole through the gate down to the stream, and there she stood, her hands upon her

throbbing heart. Before her eyes passed the dark years of her childhood, in which his kindness had been the one bright star. Now this star had become a sun, a beaming, golden sun, the night had been converted into day, into what blissful day.

"Good evening, Julchen" cried a clear voice behind her.

She started and turned around.

"Why do you stand here looking in the water like one who longs to commit suicide?"

"Good evening, Thereschen," replied the girl with a slight sigh, and stepping to the wall of the neighboring garden, she extended her hand toward the slight feminine form which leaned, slight and dainty as an elf in the moonlight, out of the vine-entwined frame.

"How are you, little one?" asked Therese, "I congratulate you on your birthday. I would have gladly come over, but I saw you washing early, and in the afternoon your aunt with the doctor called, and you know how papa is—always happy if he can find an appreciative person, whom he can drag into the cellar. They stayed to supper and have just gone home. The delicate face, surrounded by golden hair, smiled roguishly down upon the young neighbor.

"Listen, Julchen, I believe your doctor is singing —father's *Rauentheler* is the cause of that."

Indeed the doctor's deep voice rang through the garden:

"Nur am Rhein will ich leben,
Nur am Rhein geboren sein,
Wo die Berge tragen Reben,
Und die Reben goldnen Wein!

The girls listened as quiet as mice. The singer on the other side of the wall advanced, now he went out

of the garden, descended the steps to the river, loosened the boat and rowed out into the broad silvery stripe which trembled on the water, as he had done many and many a time when a boy.

"Good night!" said Julia softly to her friend, slipping into the garden. The latter, however, heeded her not; she waved her handkerchief toward the stream and cried: "Sing on, sing on, doctor! But be careful of the water-sprites!"

And when Julia turned around, it seemed to her as if Thereschen herself were a nixy, with her gleaming, golden hair, and her white, vaporous gown; but no reply came from the boat and the girl smiled blissfully to herself.

Were all the fair-haired sprites of the stream to come she would not fear them, she believed and loved.

CHAPTER VI.

DREAMS.

On the night of Fritz Roettger's arrival two letters were written in the old house to Frieder.

Aunt Riekchen's ran thus:

"My darling boy:—Enclosed you will find the sum required. I am sorry you have such expense; the soldier's coat is a costly thing, especially in Berlin. But the time there will soon pass, and at your barracks you can again live simpler, can you not, Frieder? I have had a slight dispute with Aunt Minna regarding this money; she maintains that you spend more than is necessary. She knows nothing of the demands made on an officer; we never have had a soldier in the family. I trust you and believe that for your old aunts' sake you will not be extravagant. You know how the value of money has decreased and you know too that I have to take care of your sister as well.

"I am pleased that you are coming at Whitsuntide, it will be to me the sunshine of the day. Fritz is here; he says he saw you rarely or never in Berlin. I pray you, be friendly with him, you are no longer children. God bless you, my heart's darling!

"Ever your aunt who loves you as a mother

"Friederike Trautmann."

And Julia wrote too:

"Dear Frieder!—I send you eight dollars which I have saved. Please, please, do not write to aunt so

soon again for money; she has, I think, serious troubles. I am very sorry to see by your letter to me to-day that you cannot make both ends meet. Had you become, as aunt wished, an engineer or a commissioner, rather than an officer—but now it can't be helped. Aunt looks miserable. Do not tell her I sent you money, I earned it in secret! I wanted so badly to pay for painting lessons with it, but it is employed for a good purpose. I thank you for your congratulations and am as ever,

"Your devoted sister,

"Julia."

These two letters were handed to his master still in bed by a servant one Sunday morning at about ten o'clock, together with a bill of exchange. The handsome young lieutenant's fretful face became a shade brighter when he heard the jingling of the gold pieces which the postman was counting out upon a table, bearing the remains of an excellent supper, in the adjoining room, an elegant but small salon.

"God be praised! To be sure, it is little enough!' he murmured. The letters he did not read just then, they did not interest him. Moreover, he hated so-called family letters.

His old aunt's affection was distasteful to him, and his sister—great heavens, what a voluminous letter! What could she want? He always thought of his sister with mingled feelings of compassion and fear. Compassion, because she had spent so joyless a youth and fear, because if she did not chance upon a husband, she might some fine day become a burden to him. Why indeed was the girl ever born? From the very first her life had been of no importance!

He remembered quite distinctly the day on which

the child was born, and that just at this time the circumstances of the family were more straitened than usual. Now, now the "old lady" at home was growing deucedly close, for the reason that this sister had to be cared for! Well, at Whitsuntide he must go to Andersheim, it could not be helped, he could not defer the visit forever. Moreover, the thought was not so very terrible to him, for a Whitsuntide on the Rhine has its charms, and the women surely could not require him to sit all day with them in the garden. The steamboat-landing was only a few hundred paces from the house, and when one was standing on the deck, then adieu, ennui!

Meditating thus, he ate his breakfast; then he wrote to a comrade to say that he hoped to be present at the merry little supper after the theater that evening; commissioned his man to obtain a certain sort of chocolate bonbons, the favorite sweet of a lady of his acquaintance, also a bouquet of pink roses mixed with May-bells, the favorite flowers of another lady, donned a suit which had just come from the tailor's, and repaired to a fashionable restaurant to dine.

Aunt Riekchen, however, on Whitsuntide, with tears of joy clasped her "beloved boy" in her arms, and attributed his heavy eyes and his pale complexion to the many duties incumbent upon his position, and to the unhealthy Berlin air. She had prepared his favorite dishes and fetched the last bottles of Markobrunner from the cellar, Julia had set the table in the garden, placing upon it a bunch of peonies.

She was so happy! Her brother gazed at her in surprise when she came toward him with slightly flushed cheeks and those peculiar eyes which peeped from beneath their lashes so brightly and so velvety-brown.

He never knew that she had such pearly teeth, but he had never seen her smile in former days, now she smiled, as blissful mortals do in remembering something sweet, beautiful, wonderful.

"Welcome, Frieder!" The words sounded so fresh; he could not realize that this girl was the little, timid, much-rebuked Miss Good-for-nothing whom he had slyly pushed and cuffed and to whom he had scarcely vouchsafed a kind word all her life.

At any rate she bore him no ill-will for it, she was anxious for his comfort like a true sister—she was so happy and happy people could be nothing but good. With how little was she contented! How petty were her joys to be sure! No one knows how self-sufficient a thing is a maiden's love. When she rose early in the morning, to tidy the rooms, how delightful it was to listen over the balusters to hear if *he* were crossing the hall to the garden, on his way to the Rhine. It was so delightful to meet him in the garden several hours later and to receive from him a pleasant, grave salution. Not once were their hands extended, wherefore? Julia understood him; he was still a poor doctor without practice, how could he woo her? He had said to his mother, as the two sat in the arbor, and she, Julia, passed by to see to the vegetable beds:

"You must know, mother, that first of all I must gain a foothold in my profession. For the present do not annoy me with anything else; everything, even marriage, will come in its time."

And aunt too! In all her life the austere woman had never been so gracious to Miss Good-for-nothing as she was that spring. In the evening she called beneath her window for Julchen to come into the arbor, and how at such times the girl flew down the stairs

with her workbasket! Once even Frau Roettger took from the "imposed-upon child" the pile of stockings to be darned, that the doctor, Therese and Julia might row over to the meadows. How charming was the ride! The doctor sang—for Therese did not cease begging him to do so—all sorts of sad and gay melodies, and finally a song which ran:

Wo ein Röslein steht,
Wo ein Vorhang weht,
Wo am Ufer Schiffe liegen,
Wo zwei Augen braun
Uebe rn Strom hinschau'n,
O, da möcht ich fliegen, fliegen!"

Was there not a rose-bush in front of her window, and did not the light drapery float merrily in the breeze, and were not her eyes brown? She meditated and allowed the waves to glide through her fingers, unconscious of the sparkling, blue eyes gazing smilingly and fixedly at the singer.

Thereschen Krautner was a pretty and very stylish young lady. Her father's wealth was evident in every fold of her attire. She was plump yet dainty, half a head shorter than Julia, had small, charmingly dressed feet, and pink, dimpled hands encased in gloves with innumerable buttons. Her costume was made by one of the "first" tailors at Frankfurt; she had a boudoir with silken-hung walls and the most delicate furniture, a parrot and a pet dog and reigned supreme in her papa's fine country-seat. In short, Therese was a spoiled child, whose one trial was that papa could not cast aside the manner of the former journeyman-mason, who forty years before had entered a Thuringen village, bare-footed and with a knapsack on his dusty smock-frock, and there in time became master, then

contractor, with such luck that gold was fairly showered upon him. "The saying 'Gold lies in the streets' was true in my case," he was in the habit of saying, "I did not think when I entered the town that it would in later years become a fashionable bathing-resort. There is no house nor cottage there that I did not build."

In his old home he built himself a magnificent villa, and in the evening he sat at the "Traube" at the brown table in the same spot, where, as apprentice his ears had been boxed by his master, for this coffee-room was added at that time. And in the spot where he had once yelled with pain, his voice now resounded as town councilor and honorary citizen. Herr Krautner was very well satisfied with himself, and well he might be, for besides being stout and jolly, he was always glad to do good and since his wife's death he spoiled his only daughter , beyond measure. He was in the habit of saying, his "Reschen" could marry whom she would, and were it the poorest of men—but never should she marry an officer! I would sooner hang the girl," he always concluded.

The young girl had provisionally no variety of choice, for there were no soldiers in Andersheim except the old counselor of the court of aids, who had upon his visiting-card "Lieutenant" and who on the Emperor's birthday appeared in an antediluvian uniform and a helmet as high and pointed as a steeple. Thereschen on the other hand, while in no danger from the military man was courted by assessors, teachers, merchants, but for the present was exceedingly reserved and said, there was no hurry about marrying, she wanted to enjoy her youth.

"There you are right!" agreed her father with a resounding laugh.

So the evening before Whitsuntide arrived and Julia set the table under the nut-tree. In her happiness she had succeeded in coaxing both aunts, so that the occupants of the house sat together at one table for the first time in many years. The young men avoided each other as much as possible—this family reunion did not bid fair to be very comfortable. The elegant officer in the light gray spring suit, with faultlessly kept hair and beard and incredibly long nails on his delicate, white fingers, contrasted strongly with the broad-shouldered young doctor, who wore a neat, light house jacket and an old straw hat which Frau Roettger had put away from a former vacation, pushed back on his head on account of the heat. Fritz was a merry, typical Rhinelander, although this gladsome manner of taking and enjoying life, lay only like a veil over the seriousness which formed the nucleus of his character. The two mens' mutual aversion was unchanged.

The conversation turned upon politics. Frau Roettger liked to hear herself talk on the subject and from year to year predicted an inevitable, great war. "This year it will come, and then, mark my words, it will be terrible!"

Frieder smiled contemptuously and twirled his mustache at a remark of the doctor's, and before they were aware of it, a very animated conversation was taking place between the two young people. The doctor finally ceased, and asked once more for some of the excellent shad with the bones of which he was kept so busy apparently that he was unable to speak. Thereupon Frau Minna took up the discontinued debate, and the lieutenant, who was nervously toying with the food upon his plate, continued the skirmish only

more sharply, for he was aggravated by the cool nonchalance of the doctor, to whom his old schoolmate's opinion seemed a matter of indifference.

"I believe, madame," he snarled—since he had become an officer, he called Frau Roettger thus, from preference—"I believe, madame, you are venturing upon a province which you can not altogether grasp—"

"Ah, is that so!" cried the irritated woman. "Can children talk upon subjects in which I cannot join? Your newly-fledged wisdom does not impress me by far, my son, and the fable of the egg that wants to be cleverer than the hen, does not hold good here—do you understand?"

"Mother!" exclaimed the son soothingly, as she was about to say more. But she desisted and her face, crimson with anger, smiled sweetly; up the path came Councilor Krautner and behind him his daughter, to pay a neighborly visit. In a trice the agitation was quelled by the old gentleman's genial laughter and the pretty girl's clear, bell-like "Good evening!" The table was cleared and dessert brought in. Frau Roettger took the keys from her belt and sent her son into the wine-celler in order that her neighbor might taste the Extra forte, of which she had spoken—"You know, sir" —it had been her late husband's favorite wine.

Julia, a light in her hand, was just coming down the stairs of the house as Fritz again ascended from the cellar. Her feet hesitated a moment; she turned to look at him, but he only bowed carelessly and opened the door of the kitchen. By the red light of the candle she thought he looked vexed. Was he provoked with Frieder? It was an insufferable thought to her. She waited until he came back again from the kitchen with the bottles.

"Fritz," she asked with hesitation, "are you angry with Frieder?"

He looked up absently and his hand lightly touched her shoulder. "No, my dear child!" Then he vanished through the garden door.

Pensive and disappointed she followed him. If he had but had a moment to spare for her; he had been kind, but—so—so—careless, so absent. She advanced to the table and placd the candles upon it; her chair was occupied by Thereschen. She glanced toward the other end of the table where the young doctor had been seated—the councilor was in his place. Fritz sat beside Thereschen, while Frieder was on her other side. No one thought of fetching her a chair, she had to wait upon herself. But when she reached the lawn where the chairs stood, she seated herself and looked steadily, with wistful eyes, at the group beneath the chestnut-tree. "Will he not miss you?" she asked herself, and her burning eyes hung upon him who puffed forth in tiny clouds the smoke of a cigar, without participating in the very animated conversation his neighbor and the lieutenant were carrying on.

He must feel how she was looking at him, said she to herself; but her eyes did not seem to have the mysterious power. The old gentleman's loud laughter reached her at regular intervals. Then Aunt Riekchen rose and went slowly toward the house. The seat beside him was vacant, but Julia did not stir; she felt so weary she could have wept. Then her heart throbbed wildly—he rose and walked along under the vine arbor to where she was sitting. She waited breathlessly. "Only one word, one kind word!" murmured her lips; but just before reaching her he turned, without having seen her, and walked toward the Rhine. At the wall

he paused and looked at the dark river; a towing-steamer, whose following of laden vessls could be counted by the number of bright lamps, was working against the current. The doctor did not return to the table; only when Frau Roettger's voice called out: "Fritz, Fritz, the folks want to go home!" did he turn and just near by Julia's chair he and Thereschen Krautner met.

"Where have you been?" cried the young girl.

"Did you miss me?" he asked softly, bending over her.

She was silent as if in confusion.

"Good-night, Fraulein Therese," he said simply, and their hands touched for an instant; when the lieutenant advanced, Fritz raised his hat formally and again turned silently into the dark walk.

And Julia did her duty; she collected the plates and the glasses and folded the tablecloth. She heard Frau Minna, who was returning from seeing her guest's off call angrily to her son.

"If you were not so old, I should really scold you! What have you to run away from? It is true that the soldiers excel you students in such things!"

"In what things?"

"Well, deceive yourself and another," said she softly. "But you need have, no fear, such a—"

Julia turned away, so she did not hear the flattering epithet applied by Frau Roettger to her brother.

And little Miss Good-for-nothing fell asleep, notwithstanding that her heart was heavy with a fearful dread. She employed her old means of comfort—she pressed her dark head into the pillow and once more with closed eyes lived through the blissful moments in her attic chamber. Ah, surely Fritz had only wan-

dered into the garden, because she was no longer at the table—surely—she was quite positive! And with this conviction she slept the deep, dreamy sleep of a young person who is fatigued from work.

CHAPTER VII.

AN IDYL: THEN DISSOLUTION.

The lieutenant did not think at all of making the Whitsuntide excursion of which he had spoken, and Miss Good-for-nothing, who, of course with her aunt's permission intended to prepare a simple meal in the first holiday, was obliged to give up her church-going and to stand at the kitchen-fire, for according to Aunt Rieckhen's opinion, a royal Prussian lieutenant upon a Whitsun furlough could not possibly be put off with an omelette.

Julia yielded without a sigh, all people could not celebrate. Fritz had gone away to make professional calls, he had several patients! How eagerly the young girl listened for the new bell in the hall, which bell had been especially put in for the the young doctor, and which was an obnoxious messenger with a shrill, horrible tone. To-day too, he had gone away early and Julia had learned that "Uncle Doctor" had taken him to a consultation into the country in his carriage.

Toward noon her brother donned his uniform and with clinking saber descended the stairs and crossed the hall in order to pay a visit at Krautner's. To be sure he came back soon, for Papa Krautner was already lunching, although the clock had just struck twelve; the housemaid having informed him that her master could not be disturbed at his meal. The lieutenant was on the point of forsaking Julia's roasted veal

and of taking the next best ship to Rudesheim that he might more easily escape from the monotony there. Then another idea occurred to him. He entered the small, neat kitchen in which his sister was working, and asked what she intended to do all day.

"I shall sit in the garden with my books, was the reply.

"With your books?"

"Yes, I like to read."

"That is terribly tiresome! Is there not one young girl for you to associate with?"

"Yes, Thereschen comes occasionally; it may be that she will visit me to-day. She does not like the Whitsuntide confusion, and Sunday she is almost always here."

"She is right, I do not like to make myself conspicuous either," he agreed. "How would it be, Julchen, were we to fly entirely into solitude and were I to row you over to the island?"

"That would be kind of you!" said his sister, "there is surely no one over there!"

"Toward evening we will prepare punch and you can see to the food," he proposed.

She nodded. "Do not forget to invite Fritz, Frieder," she implored, turning away her head, for she felt she was blushing.

He did not seem to hear it and hastened to leave the kitchen which was full of steam; arrived in his rooms, he flung himself upon the sofa and wove a golden web for the future.

In the afternoon he rowed the two young girls to the island. The air was filled with the perfume of elders, the ships carried gay pennons and the stream was swarming with boats containing gayly-dressed

people. On the island it was so much lonesomer, there was no tavern there.

The young officer chained the boat to an overhanging tree, and the three trod the grass-overgrown path which led to the western point of the island, where, as the lieutenant maintained, was the best place for Fraulein Therese's hammock as well as the finest view. Julia followed, her grave, pale face wore a trace of disappointment—Fritz had not gone, he had indeed not returned home. She heeded neither the unusual loquacity of her brother, who stripped a wild apple-tree of its blossoms for a bouquet for Fraulein Therese, nor did she understand what he said to her.

The spot, which he had selected, was indeed wonderfully beautiful, and when Thereschen was swinging in her low hammock and her white dress floated around her like a cloud, when the lieutenant had settled himself upon a rug at her side, Julia took her book and grew so deeply interested in it, that she speedily saw nothing more of the outer world. The chattering and the laughter of the couple, the soft rippling of the water, which fell upon her ear, accorded so perfectly with the story of the beautiful fair lady in her citadel Schwarz Wasserstelz in the midst of the Rhine and with her secret love for the minstrel Hadlaub in Gottfriield Keller's charming novel, that she did not notice how the time flew and that the conversation of the two young people grew lower and lower, that pauses arose, long pauses, interrupted only by a song in the distance or a sigh near by and the splashing of the water on the shore.

And the sunbeams scattered sparks through the boughs of the old elms, bright, golden sparks, for night was approaching. Then the light of dying day

tinged the grand, proud river with purple, and suddenly too, this purplish shade glowed upon the cheeks of the fair girl who had raised herself in the hammock, her head half-turned from the man at her feet, while her hand rested in his and he kissed it again and again.

"But so soon—I do not know what I shall reply—" said she hesitatingly; nevertheless there trembled about the pretty mouth a smile of happy pride.

"When one feels as strongly as I do, there is no hesitation. I like hasty resolution and know too, immediately what I want, what I *must* do. I know that I love you, Therese, I knew it the first second that our eyes met."

Terrified, she snatched her hand from his, Julia had risen and passed them on her way to the shore. "There he comes!" said she, as if to herself, looking at the skiff which shot across the gleaming water.

The couple behind her looked at each other; Therese laid her slender finger on her lips, once more Frieder took her hand and feeling a slight pressure of the same, he too, sprang up.

"Good evening!" was the indifferent greeting received by the young doctor, "you have come in time to mix the punch. Julia, unpack the lunch basket!"

"At last!" cried the doctor gayly. "When an hour ago I was about to start—mother told me you were here—an unfortunate fellow came with a bleeding, cut head, and I had to mend it. How do you do, Fraulein Therese!" And he seated himself by the girl and threw his hat upon the nearest budding bush. "Is this not an ideal evening?" he added.

Then he looked up at Therese, who, in the rosy light appeared as fresh as the apple-blossoms she wore in her belt.

"You have hair like the Lorelei herself," said he with frank admiration, "you only lack the golden comb. Julia, are you brewing the punch? That is right; I am too tired and have had no holiday like you."

Those of the small party were all very gay, as gay as young people on the Rhine can be, who have golden wine in their glasses and secret love in their hearts. Therese's silvery laughter every moment was wafted with the warm wind over the stream, and the doctor seconded it. The lieutenant only laughed occasionally, then he sighed, drank to the fair Lorelei and quoted verses:

"An den Rhein, An den Rhein, zieh nicht an den Rhein, mein Sohn, ich rathe Dir gut!" and sighed again; Julia alone was silent. She crouched upon the trunk of a tree and gazed at the fading light in the sky; her hands were clasped about her knees, her lovely profile stood out sharply from the clear background. But although she did not participate in the loud merriment of the others, she was probably the happiest of all, for her faith was as constant as her love.

At dawn on Whit-Monday morning Friedrich Adami came from the garden. Julia could not believe her eyes. And soon after he was whistling so merrily in his room that a shade of surprise flitted over her face. Again he gave up his Rhine tour, again he donned his uniform and crossed the court with the same clatter as he had the day before. Frau Roettger, who was just coming out of church, stopped in the street and watched him until he disappeared behind the wrought iron bars of the Krautner abode.

The brave woman suddenly felt anxious. Great God, if he—but no, he could not take the fortress

over there by storm! He would be capable of it, he had always possessed a certain boldness—but Thereschen surely would not? Still, the girls of the period! He was a handsome fellow, but in her opinion not to be compared with Fritz. "Heavenly Father, now I am curious!" With these words the lady seated herself at her window and awaited the officer's return. She was obliged to wait a long time, and when at length he came, she could make nothing out of his manner. If possible he made more noise with his sabre, and his usually pale face was flushed—whether from happiness or disappointment she could not tell.

It was not long before his commanding voice was heard above "Julia! Julia!"

The young girl who had been with her testy aunt, to prove the sad fact that the monthly allowance was not sufficient for the present opulent housekeeping, and who accepted patiently many an angry retort, rushed in affright to her brother's room. "Here I am, Frieder —for God's sake, what is it?"

He had opened his uniform and was pacing the floor.

"Can you keep a secret?" he asked finally.

"I do not understand you. If you have something to confide in me, of course I will not speak of it."

"You must help me!" he continued. "Do you hear?"

"Always, if it be in my power, Frieder."

"Here is the whole confounded story," he went on, speaking lower. "Therese and I—

"Thereschen and—you?"

"Yes, Therese and I this morning plighted our troth. Do not open your eyes so wide—you do not believe it, how silly you look. Is it something unheard of, that a young lieutenant and a pretty girl should become engaged?"

"Oh, God!" stammered the girl, "How pleased I am!"

"Yes, it was something, I can tell you! When I, a little while ago, went to the old Philistine and asked his consent, he thanked me for the honor and—and—well, to be concise—a rejection, but not a fine one! Like this!" And he described a circle in the air, signifying the circumference of the rejection.

"And Thereschen?" asked she.

"I did not see her at all. I assured the old—" he employed a disrespectful epithet, applied to an animal with long ears—"that Therese would not give me up; he then, with a good-natured smile and his hands, with the seal ring on the index-finger of the right one, on his stomach, assured me I need not worry, she had learned to 'obey orders' and would listen to reason. A terrible man, and his German! It is enough to disgust a man in my position!"

"Poor Therese! Does she love you?"

"What a question! Does she? I now want to send her a comforting message, do you understand? You must go over; the old man sleeps after lunch. Tell her I must speak with her once more, that I will be true to her forever, and that her father must be softened, she is his pet, his only child."

As if exhausted, the young officer seated himself in a corner of the sofa, all the torture of disappointment was expressed on his pale face. Suddenly he struck his fist heavily upon the table. "And all would have been well, all!" he muttered.

"I will tell Therese; I am sorry for you," said Julia sympathetically. "I think too, if you hold firmly together, her father will finally yield, for he loves Reschen very dearly—"

This was an unlucky day. At the table Aunt Riekchen, without regarding Julia's presence, for she generally excluded her from all conversations held with her brother, in a husky voice abruptly informed her foster-son that she was unfortunately no longer in a position to give him as much allowance as she had hitherto. She uttered the word with downcast eyes, as if she were ashamed to acknowledge her straitened circumstances.

He laughed loudly and harshly, and drained his wine-glass at one draught. "A good appetite!" cried he then, flinging his napkin upon the table and slamming the door behind him.

"Aunt!" said Miss Good-for-nothing, laying her hand softly and timidly upon the old lady's transparent, trembling right hand, "Aunt, do not be sad, we will arrange so that all will come right—we will sell the house, will we not? Then you will be quite rich, and we can rent a small, neat apartment looking on the Rhine, and I will make it so cozy, that you will never miss this big old house which is only a trouble to you."

But her hands were suddenly thrust aside. "How can you know what one's old homestead means? You have not a spark of affection in you, or you would not talk as if the sale of a house was the same thing as spreading bread and butter."

Julia looked at her sorrowfully. "Ah, if you had any idea how I love this old house—" she longed to say. But she was silent, both were silent.

When the young girl left the room with the plates, Fraulein Riekchen put both hands to her eyes, and the tears trickled through her fingers. She would have liked to have followed the child, to ask pardon for her

severity, but she could not bring herself to do so. Julia soon after stole through the garden gate in to the Krautner estate. Unseen she reached the house and passed through the drawing-room which was almost too sumptuously furnished with East Indian rugs, bamboo furniture, and Japanese fans, to her friend's boudoir. The shades at the wide windows were lowered; the light was subdued and the air was filled with the perfume of Eau de Cologne and some other fragrant scent which the young girl kept on her toilette-table.

The light-blue pink-flowered furniture with its twisted gilt frames was in confusion; at the hearth lay the remnants of a porcelain statuette and upon the couch waving a broken fan, in a charming but crumpled white dress, with tearless, defiant eyes, lay the hard-hearted father's victim, Therese Krautner. When she became aware of her friend's presence, for Julia approached her couch solemnly and gravely, she turned her head to the other side and began to weep.

"Poor Reschen!" And the girl's pale face bent over the despairing one, "Ah, that must be hard! But take heart, Frieder sends his love and he will remain true to you. He has sent me to bid you not to lose courage. True love can conquer all things, there have been hard-hearted fathers before this, Reschen."

"Ah—ah—ah!" resounded behind her, "hard-hearted, do you say, little fraulein?" And Councilor Krautner, who had entered unperceived, stood behind the terrified girl, his hands crossed upon his aldermanic stomach, his red, full-moon face distorted into a good-natured grin. "I am certainly no hard-hearted, unnatural father," he continued, stroking Julia's cheeks with the back of his hand, "I am simply an exper-

ienced man who will not allow his blinded child to leap into misfortune at one bound. Yes, yes, into misfortune, dear heart! But you do not understand it because you are all just at the most foolish period of your lives."

"Dear Herr Krautner—" Julia raised both hands—"but if they love each other so dearly, so dearly—"

"Ah—they think so themselves," he laughed, "but he will not die of it, and she will not, I know them better. And now, Reschen, I require that this whimpering cease—do you understand?"

The young girl sat up. "You must know, papa," cried she with angry eyes, "I will never give him up—never, never!"

"Well, we will see about that," was the reply

"If you think I shall in time forget him—"

"I do think so, little girl!"

"Then you are mistaken, and here, in Julia's presence, I tell you, that if a year from to-day you have not consented to this engagement, then—"

"I will take another!" he completed.

"We shall see," said she.

"Yes, we shall see, you are right. Now you can wish for anything your heart desires, but not a soldier; I am not joking, I swore it once—why? it will not interest you. No, soldiers in general and this one not in particular! No offense, little miss," he turned to Julia, "but see—a strange man comes and asks me for no less than all, and that is a great deal, do you understand? It might suit some, oh yes, but if this one here is a silly girl who allows herself to be dazzled in a quarter of an hour—I am not so absurd. A clear head! is my maxim. Alois Krautner has always a clear head, or he would not have got on so far. Your most obedient servant!"

"You never have loved," said his little daughter with contemptuous, quivering lips.

"I? Indeed! Have I not? But within the bounds of reason, you saucy girl! And I toiled and moiled, before I approached her father and said: 'Give me your Hannah and your blessing, I can maintain a household, support a wife and more besides.' There's the rub, do you see? That is all, so basta and no offence!"

He turned, closed the door, and he could be heard from without whistling. It was the old Dessauer March, which he always whistled when very much agitated. Even when his dear, adored Hannchen died, he paced the floor and whistled these strains with the tears rolling down his cheeks.

"Now you see how sad my life is," said the pretty maid bitterly, pushing her tangled hair from her flushed cheeks. "Comprehension, refined feelings are not to be found. And do you know, Julia, when I tried to move him, when I told him we had already planned our future life so delightfully, we would settle in the neighborhood, upon the wedding tour, he would show me his magnificent home, his Rome, then he laughed as if I had uttered the best joke, and asked if that was all possible in two days' acquaintance! He wanted to know if we had already bought a Baedekser? That years ago he and mamma had put up at a hotel in Rome, where they would have been very comfortable had they had a stove and a great deal of insect powder. Oh, God, how can any one desecrate the lost sacred of things thus! You, Julchen, must help us!" she exclaimed, springing up. "If father remains obstinate, we will elope—yes, we will! Tell—Lieutenant Adami—I—" She suddenly paused, it

seemed rather forward in her to make the lieutenant such a proposition. "At least," she continued, in a low voice, pulling at her handkerchief, "at any rate you will carry my letters, will help us to see each other, dear Julchen!"

Julia did not reply; she stared fixedly before her, a dark frown lay between her finely arched brows.

"Do you hear?" cried Therese impatiently, "you must help us! I must see him to-night! You have your attic room, your studio, no one will seek us there, and you must tell your aunt, it is—"

"No!" came curtly and severely from Julia's lips.

"You will not help your own brother? Nor me, your only friend?" cried Therese, who was arranging the hair upon her forehead at the mirror, and was bathing her eyes in cold water.

"No, Therese, just because he is my brother. I will not help to make it appear as if he wanted you from pure self-interest, and—I think, you will help yourselves alone. Real love always attains its goal."

"What a silly thing you are!" burst forth the fair maiden angrily. "How can I help myself alone? Do you not yet know my father? No letter enters the house except in a locked mailbag, and he will watch my every movement from now on, and—"

"With secrecy and letter-writing behind his back you can surely help yourselves. I did not mean that," answered Julia. "Show your father that your love is strong and true, he will then surely be prevailed upon; and in the end, if Frieder loves you honestly and deeply, he will for your sake become something else but an officer, he is still young—if it is only for this reason: that your father does not want you to marry an officer. I will speak to my brother about that!"

"You are very kind!" was the irritable and disappointed answer. "But I think, he is just created for an officer, and for my sake he need not change his condition."

"*Condition* has no weight in the matter surely, if you love each other so dearly!" exclaimed Julia indignantly. "Do you love the uniform or the man?"

Therese made no reply.

"If he could become, for example, an agriculturist," persisted Julia.

"If you please," cried Therese angrily, "save your advice which savors so little of worldly experiences. Go rather to him and tell him I desire to speak with him once more, no human being can prevent that. Or no, do not—you pull as long a face as if I wanted to induce you to steal. You are of no use even for that! Heavenly Father, I now only require one thing more of you, do not pay any atteniton to the whole affair, give me your hand upon it, I will help myself alone. Say 'Truly!' three times that you will betray me to no one."

Julia extended her hand, but she did not speak. Therese no longer heeded her friend's serious face. She sat at the table and scribbled a few lines hastily upon a pale lilac sheet of paper with a gilt monogram. "Farewell!" murmured Julia, going sorrowfully through the garden to her own home.

Her brother was standing under the nut-trees; he still looked paler and more nervous than usual. "Well?" he asked impatiently. "You stayed an eterity. I have been upon the rack. What did she say?"

"She will be true to you, Frieder—but—"

"But?"

"But her father will never consent."

He drew a deep breath. "If *she* only consents—" said he softly. He did not even thank his sister; he ascended hastily to his room and wrote to Moses Aronsohn in Berlin, that he must have patience a little longer; he had a good match in prospect, only the father's objection had to be overcome. But if Herr Aronsohn were to present his case before the regiment, the marriage would be doubtful and he would then get nothing, for his aunt had lost her fortune. Respectfully, and so forth. He posted the letter himself and returned with a lighter heart than he had had for months. When near the house a pretty servant passed him slowly and thrust into his hand a small, pale lilac envelope. His eyes lighted up and scarcely had he reached his room than he broke the seal. Therese begged him to come to the old summer house on their property, "at nine o'clock, when papa is at the 'Traube.'"

At about eleven o'clock Julia was startled from the sleep into which she had fallen by a rattling at her window. She was familiar with her brother's habit of former days, of throwing gravel at the windows when he found the house locked. She dressed quickly and rushed down the stairs, in order to open the door, in which the key was always sticking on the inside—Frau Roettger wished it so, because then the locks would be of no use to the thieves. Frieder crossed the threshold.

"Indeed you retire with the chickens," he jested, and advanced to the steps, humming a gay melody. "Good-night," he whispered up above in the dark hall, seizing his sister's sleeve. "Therese is a sweet treasure, I tell you, and, girl when the marriage takes place, I will give you a fine dress, do you under-

stand? And now be good and kind to my little betrothed and do not rest yourself over us as a moral judge. When you once have loved, you will find, that one is not easily scared off by such an old Philistine, and that secrecy has its charms. But I do not believe such an icicle could ever form any idea of 'love.' Good-night and—silence! Do you understand? Or else the matter will fall through!"

"Good-night!" said she, and in her evening prayer she had something to ask of the dear Lord; that he might help to bring these two together, that he would give them the strength to overcome all obstacles, and that he would lead the father to yield.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE NIGHT OF THE BALL.

Frau Roettger's face had never been so pleasant and placid as during this disagreeable autumn; while she usually anticipated winter with a sigh, she now rejoiced over every faded leaf which the storm tore from the trees. For to these constant rains and storms she partly owed the sunshine in her soul.

The oldest inhabitants of the town could scarcely recall so unhealthy a fall, grippe and rheumatism held full sway and children's diseases were epidemic; the young doctor's bell was rung constantly all day and with an important air Frau Minna jotted upon the slate on her son's door the names of those in search of aid. As if she had the greatest piece of good news to announce she met her Fritz with a beaming face when he came home wet and tired, to tell him that he must hurry for the manufacturer Lindemann probably had a stroke of apoplexy, the gymnasium teacher's children were all and every one happy with every symptom of scarlet fever, and old shoemaker Martes aged mother was moaning with an attack of the heart.

"It can not go on this way," said the young doctor one day, when in consequence of Doctor Kortum's illness demands upon him increased. "It can not go on thus, I cannot manage to attend to Uncle Kortum's entire practice together with my own, if I have to

pay a visit for every swollen face, for every slight cough. I will arrange hours of consultation, those who are not seriously indisposed must come to me."

"That is wise," agreed his mother. "Ah, Fritz, you did not yourself think you would so rapidly become the favorite physician here!"

"It is the charm of newness," replied he, evasively, and he went into his room to compose a notice for the paper which should inform the inhabitants of Andersheim, that Doctor Roettger's office hours were from eight to nine in the morning and from three to four in the afternoon, Sunday and Wednesday from nine to ten o'clock gratis for the poor.

Frau Minna now sat every morning and every afternoon behind the curtains at the window of her sitting-room and counted those who "weary and heavy laden," came to her Fritz. And truly, a fine lot of customers crossed the old court and entered the open door to seek advice, customers from the very best families; mothers with their young daughters and the young rich wives of manufacturers with their children for Fritz had the reputation of being an excellent childrens' doctor; even the handsome, mysterious widow, said to come from Russia and always enveloped in her black crepe veil, came one day, and almost startled Frau Roettger by the beauty of her face which was as pale as marble. "God forbid," said she to herself, "that he should fall in love with a person like that, who has nothing and is nothing!"

She would have liked to have seated herself in the waiting-room and to have chatted with all the sick, but that she dared not do, even when her best friend, the major's wife, appeared with her cook who had a sore finger. One day her son anticipated her heart's desire.

"Mother," said he, "occasionally during the hours of consultation can you not make some pretext to enter the waiting-room; in the first place the people will be less free to frighten one another with the most startling stories of illnesses, and in the second the dear children will not venture to meddle with my microscope and other apparatus."

The next morning Frau Roettger took her best cap out of the box, put on her "best black woolen dress," tied the strings of her silk apron, and with a face flushed with pride, presided in her son's ante-room. Unfortunately she grasped the duty with her celebrated candor and energy. The bailiff's young wife, who in reply to Frau Roettger's persistent inquiries answered with hesitation that she coughed a great deal, received the comforting assurance that both of her elder sisters had begun to cough at her age and died soon afterward of consumption. "And if I had been your mother, young lady," concluded the worthy dame, "I should never have allowed you to marry, but would have packed your trunk and have gone South with you."

Tears filled the poor little creature's eyes. She loved life, she loved her husband and her plump baby so dearly, and when she was seated before the young doctor, her delicate frame was shaken by convulsive sobs, and with difficulty Fritz drew from her the consolation his mother had offered her. And scarcely had he succeeded in quieting the fears of the sick woman, than a terrible scream was heard in the anteroom, whereupon he rushed out in affright.

His mother had the five year-old son of a railroad official upon her lap, while the child with a face pale and distorted with fear was trying to slip down, as he did so yelling lustily.

"Heavenly Father, what is the matter, mother?" he asked.

"The silly boy showed me his forefinger, and in jest I said, you would cut open his little stomach with a long knife, because it came from eating too many pears," said she crossly.

The doctor shook his head and with difficulty soothed the little fellow. But Frau Minna at the shake of his head assumed an injured air, said something again about a "silly boy" and disappeared, there was nothing there that day to interest her. Toward evening she had forgotten her unfortunate debut; she bustled about her son's room, where she laid out for him an especially fine, embroidered and plaited shirt, beside the coat which she had brushed with her own hand; she wanted to make a show of him on this evening for the first Casino ball was to take place. The old lady herself wore with her morning dress, her company cap, which was fixed upon her gray hair with large gold pins.

"It is to be hoped no one will send for you," said she; "of course it looks well to be called hastily from the table, but I should be sorry to have you wear your varnished boots in such rainy weather."

He did not seem in the happiest of moods, and replied absently, as he wearily flung himself upon the sofa. His mother, however, profited by the time left her before she had to begin her toilet, and as she poured out her Fritz's cup of coffee, she once more tried to justify her conduct of the morning.

"I always thought that little woman a goose," said she boldly, "but I did not think her so extra dumb; such a fuss to make, as if it were the greatest piece of news to her, that her sisters died of consumption."

"But one does not remind sick people of such things!"

"Is that so!" cried she, pausing, her arms akimbo, before the doctor. "You surely do not wish to make her believe that she still has a hundred years to live?"

"But, mother, it is important that one should neither frighten nor excite patients with such stories!"

"Well, I differ from you there—I think they should be frightened in order that they take care of themselves! You may depend upon it, she will not tease her husband to go to balls with her, and—"

"You would make an excellent doctor, mother," cried he with forced gayety. "Now it is time for you to make yourself fine. Then, please go on ahead—it may be that I will come into the ball-room fifteen minutes later; I have a letter still to write."

Frau Roettger disappeared, and he remained seated awhile. Then he ascended the stairs and knocked at Aunt Riekchen's door. "Is Miss Good-for-nothing here?" he asked, peering into the darkness.

"No!" was the reply.

"Where is she?"

'God knows," sighed Aunt Riekchen, "I have not seen her since dusk. She is so odd; perhaps she is grieving because she cannot go to the ball, but I have not the money, I cannot spend a halfpenny for such things."

And Fraulein Riekchen was right this time. During dinner Julia's face turned a shade paler, when Frau Roettger's maid came to ask Fraulein Julchen in her mistress' name, if she would rearrange the lace upon the said lady's black silk party dress, to which message the girl added: "It would generally be a matter of indiffernece to madame, but because she is go-

ing with our doctor to-day she wants to be especially fine."

Miss Good-for-nothing did conscientiously what she was asked to do, at the same time being forced to listen to a description of an Andersheim Casino ball painted in the most glowing colors. It never occurred to the loquacious lady that her words would make a young heart heavy. She could not imagine Miss Good-for-nothing at a ball; but two sparkling tears rose to the eyes of the girl who so busily fastened the old lace on the rustling silk. Ah, it was not on account of all the brilliance there, it was only because he was going without her. A tormenting sensation stole over her suddenly, she did not realize it, she only felt its pain and did not know that it was called —jealousy.

With trembling hands she finished her sewing, laid the dress hastily over a chair and left the room. In the hall she paused. Whither should she go with her sorrow? She opened the door which led into the garden, and stepped under the small projection. The rain was falling, the wind bent the boughs and through the gray twilight glimmered a few bright windows. Yes there, in the elegant villa at Krautner's, sat one too, who was not happy, who would be lonely likewise this evening, while all others were enjoying themselves—lonely and with the same yearning in her heart as she had. And she felt impelled suddenly to go through the rain and storm to the friend whom she had avoided more and more, since she had been her brother's betrothed. She wanted to look in a pair of eyes that did not look gay either, she wanted once more to press Therese's hand.

She put her woolen shawl over her head and hurried

along the wet garden paths; now she stood upon the floor of the lighted hall at Therese's door and knocked.

"Come in!" rang out merrily.

Miss Good-for-nothing turned the knob, and then stood upon the threshold with the expression of a child really and truly gazing upon fairyland. The cozy little nest was brightly illuminated, the gas-light gleamed amid the silken folds of the wall draperies and sparkled like hundreds of glittering stars upon the fragrant, light-blue gown interwoven with silver threads worn by the beautiful girl who was turning round and round in front of the large mirror.

'Come in!" cried Therese. "The room will get cold. It was kind of you to come, Julchen, you can help me to put this thing in my hair." She held toward the girl a small brilliant star which gleamed with every shade of the rainbow. "Is it not pretty, Julchen? Just think, papa gave it to me to-day." She tried herself to see where the ornament would show to the best advantage, and skilfully fastened it over her brow which was surrounded by waves of curly, golden hair.

'Do I suit you?" she asked then, pouring an abundance of Eau de Cologne upon her hands.

Miss Good-for-nothing paused at the small fireplace and involuntarily drew her wet, dark gown around her. "Indeed you do!" she replied, "but—"

"Well—but?" asked Thereschen, drawing on her long gloves, while she sent out the maid to fetch papa.

"But I thought—you—would not go to the ball, Therese?"

"You were mistaken. Why should I not go? One lives but once, and things cannot be changed by grieving."

"Certainly not; I only fancied it would afford you no pleasure."

Therese was spared replying, for Herr Alois Krautner appeared in his gayest mood and greeted his beautiful daughter with a "Bravo, bravo, Reschen!"

"See, papa, how finely the star sparkles up there!" cried she, turning her face toward him.

"Yes, yes! In return there is less sparkle in my purse," he laughed, and patting Julia on the shoulder, he added: "Alois Krautner should be locked up on account of his extravagance, but what can one do? She wants everything that is the fashion—everything that is the fashion—but . . she does not get everything; to-day you were lucky, but it is not always so, is it, little mousie?"

"To be sure, you bring about your will," she nodded with a pout, and when the old gentleman turned around, she made a naughty gesture behind him and laughed like a brownie.

"That is what I am master in the house for!" cried he in high glee. "But do you know what I wish?"—and he paused almost reverently before his pretty daughter, "that your mother could see you this evening." Then he drew forth his gigantic red silk handkerchief, blew his nose so that it resounded in the girls' ears like a trumpet blast, put the handkerchief again hastily in his pocket and went toward the door, whistling his favorite air: "So leben soir—"

"He is deeply moved," said Therese and turning before the mirror: "Does the waist fit well?"

"I think so—good-night, Therese, much enjoyment!"

"Wait, the carriage has not come yet."

"I must go home; good-night!"

At this moment the maid entered with something

hidden under her apron. Julia heard her say softly: "To-day there were two at the postoffice, Fraulein Therese, and saw the girl's dainty gloved right hand hastily take two yellow letters and throw them in a box of Japanese lacquer work, which stood upon a small table of bamboo and silk plush. Julia knew these letters, they were from Frieder; he always wrote upon this expensive, perfumed fancy paper. Therese had her back turned to her, nor did she turn when her friend left the room; but Julia saw in the glass a disfiguring expression of annoyance upon her lovely face.

CHAPTER IX.

GOD COMMANDS.

Julia did not return home from Therese Krautner's comforted; she was inclined to be angry with her friend and took herself to task for it. But her mood did not change. As softly as a thief she crept up to the spot which was her own, to the tiny room beneath the roof. It was quite dark here, but she found the old arm-chair and crouched shivering in it. The rain continued to fall; she could plainly hear it drip upon the tiles above her, but the roof was good and firm, and not a drop came through. Here she was hidden, here undisturbed she could yield to the morbid, defiant thoughts which laid hold so sharply upon her soul, to such a degree in fact that she was terrified at the contempt for mankind and the consuming bitterness which possessed her and which could not be driven out by any sweet memory, by any hope of later happiness. For months this hope had helped her to brighten the desolate present, on this day her heart could not believe in any happiness at all. She sat there with clenched fists, buried in her misery, and suddenly a sob escaped her breast.

Then a voice said: "For God's sake, Good-for-nothing, what is the matter that you are sitting here? You will take your death of cold."

"I am never cold!" said she defiantly.

"Good-for-nothing, I believe a great deal you say, but not that," replied the doctor good-humoredly.

"Do you know, I spent fifteen minutes with Aunt Riekchen awaiting you? I wanted to see you before I went away—but you did not come. At length this so-called studio occurred to me. Heavens, where are you? Give me your hand and lead me down, the temperature is strange up here."

He groped for her hand and drew her arm through his. "Come," said he, "lead me, I do not know my way here in the dark."

What do you want with me?" she asked, and her voice had a hard, icy ring.

"My God, I have just come—I will tell you on the way; I have not much time, child, I am going—I must go to—"

"Ah yes, to the ball! Pardon, I forgot," and she withdrew her hand.

"I am to break my neck because you let me loose?"

"Oh, no!" And under her fingers a match was struck and the end of a candle in a small lantern.

"Now you can see."

Lighting him thus she passed out of the attic-chamber to the stairs. "You were about to tell me something in a hurry," said she, without turning around.

"Hur—yes—to make it short, I wanted to ask you —of you—if it would be distasteful to you, were I to ask you to sacrifice to me a few hours of your day, to help me a little at my work—in short: if during my hours of consultation you would do the honors in my waiting-room. It may happen sometimes that I shall not be there, that the sufferers may grow impatient, that the ladies may excite one another by stories of terrible attacks, and so forth. At such times I need a pleasant face, a person with tact, a compassionate heart—and you have all that, Good-for-nothing, and therefore I wanted to ask you."

They were standing on the landing of the old narrow attic-stair, the lantern lighted but dimly the space near by, but it sufficed to show the man the joyful gleam in two dark eyes.

"Oh, how gladly!" said she, and upon her smiling face not a trace of sadness was to be seen.

"Good little Good-for-nothing," he murmured, touched by her readiness, "do not picture it so delightful!"

"You cannot imagine how pleased I am Fritz, but—aunt! I have to cook."

"It is all arranged, Julia; aunt will keep a servant again."

"That cannot be," exclaimed the young girl anxiously, "certainly not, Fritz! Ah, you do not know how—"

"I know all; please, ask no more, child! Well, will you help me?"

"Certainly!"

"Then come to me to-morrow morning, but a little *before* consulting hours, that I may tell you a few things. Now, until we meet again, Good-for-nothing! Sleep well!"

"Until we meet again!" she repeated almost inaudibly and she watched him as he hurriedly went down the stairs. He had not given her his hand once, she did not notice it; she was too happy that she could help him. What cared she for the ball, for Therese? She could work with him, for him, that was something different from dancing with him!

Like a bird she flew down the stairs and into the room to Aunt Riekchen. "Oh, how kind you are aunt," said she affectionately, approaching the old lady who sat at the table by the lamp knitting a stocking, and

looking more sorrowful than she had looked in the morning.

Fraulein Riekchen shrugged her shoulders. "One must accept aid," said she bitterly.

"Ah no, aunt; I mean for allowing me to help Fritz downstairs."

"Well yes, I mean that too; or do you think he wants you to do it for nothing? He has told me exactly what he will pay you a month."

The girl suddenly turned pale to her lips. "He intends to pay me for that?" she asked unsteadily.

"Certainly, and very generously too."

"But I will not have it!" cried Julia indignantly.

"Why not, if I may ask? Have you anything to give away? What difference does it make if it is the doctor who has become the style and engage you to receive his patients, if it is Fritz or some one else, it must be a matter of indifference to you!"

The color came and went upon Julia's face. "Then do you take what I earn," said she, at length in a hard voice, "and never tell me when he gives it to you, nor how much—I do not wish to hear it!" She turned away and left the room. She—she his paid servant! He would not have dared to offer her that, if he really loved her!

In mute anguish she wrung her hands; and so she sat half of the night beside her bed in the chilly room and sought to force her proud young heart to composure. At intervals she fancied she heard the tones of a violin and saw gowns with silver threads interwoven and gleaming, fair hair in which a star sparkled. "She must have everything that is the style," Herr Alois had cried. Now Doctor Fritz Roettger was the style—had not aunt said so?

"Good little Good-for-nothing!" rang in her ears in waltz time; his bright, clear eyes looked out of the throng of dancing couples, whom she saw before her, over at her—"Do you not know, Good-for-nothing, that I mean well by you?"

"Yes," said she half-aloud, "I know it, I know it! Up to this time you are the only person who has been kind to me, and therefore my soul, my life depends upon you. Do not wound me, for God's sake, do not wound me, it would be my death! I can not imagine anything else but that you love me! Great God, fill his heart with love for me—he must love me, otherwise I do not wish to live!"

The last words sounded like a stifled cry. But there was no one there to hear it, and the anguish and passion died away unheard and unsoothed.

At this hour upon the doctor's black coat in the brilliantly lighted ball-room of the "Traube" an incredible number of cotillion favors were collected. Yes, he was very much the style! Finally a light, fair fairy floated toward him and with a smiling face brought him the last favor, he put his arm around her and flew over the floor with her. Herr Alois Krautner struck his knee with his hand and laughed; he was seated beside Frau Roettger, who watched the couple with proud satisfaction. "A fine couple, neighbor, a fine couple!" cried Herr Krautner, "they are developed like the Thuringen firs!" Then he examined his own odd, corpulent form and his neighbor's angular one and nudged her with his elbow. "Where have they got them from? Not from either of us, madam, to be sure! There, the music has ceased; hook on, madam, I should like to have the honor of drinking coffee with you for my neighbor." And for her Fritz's

sake Frau Roettger smiled at this "old clown's" uncomplimentary candor, and laid her hand with dignity upon his arm. But in the "quality" room of the "Traube," in which the young men criticised the company a little, a young referendary, who was somewhat lively, held his beer glass toward the doctor and sang: "Roettger, Roettger, whom all the maidens love!" And the whole chorus joined in. The doctor escaped them with a laugh and arrived at home, he put all the glories of the cotillion in the waste paper basket; only one single star lay upon his writing-desk beside the note paper the next morning.

Upon this star fell the eyes of Miss Good-for-nothing, who, with head proudly erect stood beside the doctor and received his instructions with regard to her new position.

"And now forward," he concluded gayly, for a moment taking her right hand in both of his, "now comes our work, little comrade!"

CHAPTER X.

THE MATERNAL EYE.

"Truly, Good-for-nothing, you seem to be especially fitted for your office," said the young doctor to Julia a few weeks later, as she succeeded in quieting a screaming boy so that unresisting and bravely he allowed a long sliver, which he had got by falling upon some rough boards, to be taken out of his finger. "I hear your praise in all sorts of tones, from old and young, and if I have anything to find fault with, it is only that you, who can make others so happy, cannot succeed in doing the same for yourself.

"Shall I talk to myself?" she replied with a gentle smile.

"No, that is a bad habit, which is acquired only by solitary and embittered persons," he answered.

"Nevertheless, I find myself doing so occasionally," said she as if to herself, and the peculiar smile again hovered about her mouth.

"There we have it, Good-for-nothing! You shut yourself up too much; you should mingle with young people more!"

She raised her long lashes and cast such a melancholy glance at him that he was moved by it.

"Good-for-nothing," said he more impressively than before, "why do you not go to Therese's any more? You were formerly a great deal together."

"What shall I talk to her about? We have nothing

at all in common, and, what we did have—" she checked herself.

"Then come down here occasionally, mother and I are often alone."

"I do not know if I dare."

"I pray you, child, do not be absurd!" he replied angrily.

"It is perhaps absurd, Fritz; but since I know that you pay me for my assistance, I feel as if a barrier were between us, so high!" She raised her arm and stood on tiptoe. He looked at her in surprise; she stood before him pale and with quivering lips.

"Julia!" said he with emotion, seizing both of her hands "How can I explain it to you? Come, look at me—do you think I wanted to wound you? Do you not know me better than that? The only thing I desired was to help aunt in some way. You know how she is! Her pride is inflexible, notwithstanding her deplorable position, and I respect this pride; I do not think I should be any different myself. But that has no influence upon you, Julia, and—that I cannot pay you for your aid, even if I wanted to, you know. Who in the world could stand by my side, as you are now doing? Would either mother or Aunt Riekchen? Truly, little Good-for-nothing, you imagine silly things! If it is any comfort to you, you may know that your so-called salary is but a pious lie, that you simply aid me in deceiving the poor, anxious woman up-stairs for her good. I should help her in some way, whether you assisted me or not."

"Is it true? Tell me—is it true?" she asked slowly.

"What, child?"

"What you just said, that I really help you, that no other can?"

"Yes, Good-for-nothing! Have I ever told you a falsehood?"

He took the hands which were withdrawn to be put for a moment in front of her glowing face. "Then all is well, then—"

The rest he could not understand.

"Oh you silly, strange child," said he. "Is not that like mother? Now you are reasonable, eh? Good-bye, Good for-nothing, do not fret anymore!"

"No," she replied, "I will not think about it any more, I will believe all." She walked to the door, there she again turned her lovely head and her dark eyes sparkled.

"I could laugh at myself now," said she, "had I only asked you at once, Fritz!"

He opened his eyes wide. There was something like reproach in the eyes of the strange creature who looked at him, which recalled to his memory one spring afternoon up in the attic chamber, where he had kissed that beautifully arched mouth, so long and ardently. He still stared at the door after she had disappeared some time. "No, it is ridiculous! She loves me as a sister—nonsense! I have said nothing to-day surely, that—"

In a few moments he lighted a cigar, began a scientific account of nervous palpitation of the heart and speedily forgot all the girls' eyes in the universe.

When Julia reached the hall, Frau Roettger called to her:

"Lord, what have you to talk about? The last patient has been gone an eternity and I want you to help me unpack my furs, it is snowing. It should have been done long ago!"

Without observing Julia's glowing cheeks she opened

a small chamber, looking on the garden, in which chamber wardrobes and chests stood against the white-washed walls. There she unlocked an old oak chest, from which came the penetrating odor of camphor and naphthaline mingled with pepper.

"Listen," she began, kneeling beside Julia in front of the chest, "have you noticed nothing?"

"What?" asked the girl, holding for a moment motionless in the air Frau Roettger's enormous fitchet muff.

"Why!" The old lady winked confidentially. "I mean, who will really be Therese's choice? Does she tell you nothing at all?"

"Nothing at all, aunt," replied Julia.

"That is your fault," said Frau Minna, striking her fur-box so violently against the chest that a veritable cloud of pepper came from it. "Hazi! How can love affairs—hazi!—interest you?"

"God bless you, aunt!" said Julia, a roguish smile flitting over her face.

"In my time it was different—hazi! Great God, this sneezing is terrible! When we girls got together, we talked of nothing else. You could too turn the conversation upon it, for example, the next time I give a large coffee-party—do you understand? For I must give one and soon too. Then you girls can name the cards and choose your partners, and if she blushes at one of them, hentitis *eh*—hazi!"

"God bless you, aunt!"

"I shall give the coffee, before the Kaurtners go away. You probably do not know that the old blockhead coughs—the day before yesterday, they sent for Fritz. Thereschen maintains that her father must certainly go South, the sooner the better—well, they have the

money. But I should be sorry if the girl were to bring home some betrothed whom she had met on her travels; at Monte Carlo, there are shoals of men who hunt rich heiresses—I remember that from the time roulette was played at Wiesbaden and afterward there is misery."

"No, aunt, she will bring home no betrothed," said Julia in a tone of firm conviction.

"Eh?" said Frau Roettger, whose fears were calmed. "Is she too sensible!" The old lady drew nearer Miss Good-for-nothing and whispered in her tiny pink ear with a confidence she had never shown before: "Do you know, I believe, Fritz and Thereschen like to be together, and—heavens, what is there to laugh at, you silly thing?"

Miss Good-for-nothing had really laughed, so heartily, clearly and joyfully, that it rang through the room. Then she turned crimson. "Oh, aunt, forgive me," she implored.

The provoked old lady was appeased, though she muttered to herself.

"Aunt, I too, will name the cards!" promised Miss Good-for-nothing with a serious expression, although inwardly the clear, merry laughter rang through the soul. Oh, if the old lady knew, what she knew, that Thereschen had long since made her choice and the doctor—the doctor—"

"Very well—and you must help me too with the guests!"

"Willingly, aunt."

"And Riekchen must lend me her coffee-spoons, or else, with all those ladies—I shall invite all the young girls too—there will have to be a general washing-up when we come to the lemon-cream."

Good-for-nothing turned pale. "Ah, the spoons—do you not know?"

"What should I know? Surely they are not gone?"

"I do not know—I believe—"

Frau Roettger became furious. "Sold or pawned?" she cried.

"Sold, I believe,," stammered the young girl.

"Well, that is the last straw!" exclaimed the lady rising. "Great God, if our parents knew of it, thy could not rest in their graves—and all for you two, who intruded here without an atom of right, only because the lovelorn woman up there once wanted to marry your father! The whole fortune, that by rights belonged to Fritz, has been squandered by Lieutenant Adami! Had I only done as I wanted to, and had that foolish person put in an institute!"

The young girl leaned against the door-post with pale cheeks. In reply to this outburst she uttered no response; but instinctively she turned to fly, when the excited frau dropped the lid of the chest, so that it re-echoed through the house like a cannon-shot, and again raised her voice:

"And you—you good-for-nothing thing—you—"

Julia was in the hall, she did not herself know how, she did not know how she reached the seat on the other side of the stairs in the dark corner, where as a child she had many a time clenched her tiny fists in bitter, powerless rage. To-day her whole form trembled, and her heart suddenly stood still when the doctor's door was opened and his hurried steps resounded upon the flagging.

"Great heavens, what has happened?"

Usually Frau Minna was silent when he appeared, but the loss of the family silver had converted her in-

to a raging lioness. She reported in the loudest tones the horrible fact that the heavy silver coffee-spoons, the pride of the Trautmann's, bearing the arms of her mother, a born "von," were lost, and only on account of these—these—good-for-nothing—"

"Pray, be calm, mother, that is no reason why you should excite yourself thus." The son's voice had such an icy ring that the old lady's high temperature fell almost as quickly as if she had been plunged into one of the cool baths by which he could lessen the feverishness of his patient.

The mother seated herself upon the chest and began to sob.

"You take everything so lightly," she moaned, "you never think of the future; it is truly no matter of indifference for one some day to have such a burden fall upon one."

"What burden?"

"Why, Riekchen and Julia. I could stand Riekchen, she is of course, my sister—but, Julia—"

"Do not worry, she will never become a burden to you."

"Is that so?" Frau Roettger had ceased weeping, and this "Is that so?" again sounded war-like. "What do you think her future will be?" she inquired.

"Why should she not some day become a happy wife like thousands of other girls?"

The old lady's mocking laughter accompanied his reply. "I should be curious to learn to know him who would be foolish enough to take her! As little as you would marry her, will she marry any other, do you not think so? Or perhaps you have intentions?"

The door-bell rang at this moment and cut short the doctor's reply.

Julia sat unseen in her corner; with a throbbing heart she leaned her dizzy head against the brown wood-work of the stairs. She heard, without fully realizing it, that the doctor was summoned to a patient, very hurriedly, thereupon hasty steps, his steps leaving the house; then all was still. She too arose, smiling proudly yet with bowed head, and thus she ascended the stairs to Aunt Riekchen's sitting-room.

The old lady stood in the center of the room pale and trembling. "What unpleasant scene has again been enacted below? I could hear Minna's voice up here."

"Unpleasant?" asked Julia, shaking her head as if in surprise.

Aunt Riekchen breathed a sigh of relief. The girl's pale face looked so contented that certainly nothing of moment could have occurred. Julia went to and fro, however, and attended to her various duties as if in a dream.

CHAPTER XI.

LOVE AND COQUETRY.

The solemn day, on which Frau Roettger was to give her coffee party, dawned. Great commotion reigned in the house, until toward four o'clock quiet was finally restored. Directly after the consulting hours the doctor had taken to his heels; there was scarcely a chair in both of his rooms. In the hall were mingled the aroma of the fine coffee and that of the incense with which on festive occasions Frau Roettger was veritably prodigal. The large, old lantern under the ceiling, which harbored a modern petroleum lamp, was lighted; Luischen and Fraulein Riekchen's little maid were gorgeous in freshly ironed, stiffly starched white aprons, and in Frau Roettger's two rooms lamps and candles burned.

Frau Minna herself went once more critically from one room to another, smoothed out the white damask cloth, glanced with pride at the silver sugar-bowl and cream jug upon the table before the sofa of the best room and rejoiced in the possession of the rubber plants which she loved so tenderly and the leaves of which she had this day polished with a little goose-grease. They shone as if varnished; this artifice was a secret which she carefully guarded, though she was often asked how she managed to have the leaves look so fresh.

Miss Good-for-nothing, who had been again restored

to the good-favor of her aunt, appeared in a dainty, white apron in order to do the honors, as daughter of the house, in the front room, where the young girls were to drink their coffee.

"Remember not to fill the cups too full!" her aunt considered it essential to remind her, "and see to it that Luischen begins to serve once with the major's wife and the next time with the director's wife.—Riekchen has of course remained obstinately up-stairs?"

"Yes, she says she does not know all the people, and she does not feel well; she is in a very sorrowful mood."

"She never lacks reason," said her aunt. "Her darling son is probably alive, if he does not write," she murmured angrily. "There's the bell—are the servants at their posts?"

Miss Good-for-nothing hastened to receive the first arrival, but when she reached the hall she found it was not a guest who had entered, but the postman, who gave into Julia's keeping a letter for the aunt up-stairs. She looked at it with a sigh; it was again not from Frieder and the old lady was so anxiously awaiting news of him who for weeks had been silent.

She hid the letter in her pocket, it would come soon enough into the grieved woman's hands. It was a bill, sent for the seventh time, from a large linen house in Berlin, at which the lieutenant had ordered for himself the finest outfit that ever a young, elegant officer possessed.

What an oppressive atmosphere it was up above, in which the young girl was now obliged to breathe! Whatsoever the imagination of a solitary, embittered person could devise, did the old lady devise in her anxiety about the only person to whom her heart still

clung in this world. Now she saw the adored foster-son ill in a hospital; now, and this was her most horrible representation, she saw him grown reckless from despair, leading a dissolute life and then she raised both hands to her face and prayed to God that she might not experience that. Twice had she sent him registered letters, on the previous morning she had telegraphed to him and paid the answer, asking if he were ill or well—but Frieder remained silent—as silent as the grave.

And Julia steered her ark of life as well as she could, through this dark water, wreathing the poor miserable thing with modest roses and turning the rudder toward a magnificent, golden landing-place, nor did she lose courage, although the goal seemed no nearer. She tried continually to comfort the old lady and bore reproaches and scoldings with composure. She would have preferred to have said: "Do not worry about Frieder's future, for he is betrothed in secret to Therese Krautner!" But she was strictly forbidden to do so—who knows what misfortune she might bring about should she speak. So she could say nothing but write to him as well and implore him to let them hear from him.

On the stroke of four—the hour appointed for the coffee-party, Thereschen arrived at Frau Roettger's enveloped in a light fur-trimmed mantle, her rosy face framed in a white hood.

Julia welcomed her and conducted her to her aunt's bedroom, where the ladies were to lay aside their wraps, and there the charming guest displayed a toilette as elegant as usual; a dark green cloth trimmed with gold cord.

It suddenly occurred to Julia to ask Therese for her

brother, and she whispered with hesitation: "Tell me, Therese, how is Frieder? Have you heard from him?"

"Why?" was the curt question asked in return. And after a pause Therese added, as she arranged her curls. "I really do not know." Then she took her little, gold embroidered "Pompadour" and prepared to leave the room.

Julia could not follow her, other ladies arrived, and when she entered the room in which there was a noise like the humming of a swarm of bees, she saw Therese seated upon the sofa well-fortified by a bevy of young girls, and she knew that there was no possibility of talking with her without witnesses.

The young Andersheimers were unusually merry, as they diligently worked at their Christmas gifts, as diligently indeed, as if they were obliged to earn their daily bread. Therese alone held her crochet-needle idly in her hand, and listened attentively to the news being circulated from mouth to mouth. Her eyes avoided the imploring ones of Miss Good-for-nothing; only when Julia passed through the room did she pensively examine the tall, supple figure in the simple cashmere gown which since the day of confirmation had been the most valuable article in Julia's wardrobe.

"She is quite pretty," said Therese's neighbor, a fresh looking blonde with bright brown eyes, "I have seen such a face reproduced somewhere, I cannot remember whether it was in Frankfurt or in Berlin. A girl, carrying a jug upon her head and with a face as proud and yet as gentle as hers. Her eyes are fine!"

"I do not know," replied Therese, "this type of beauty, if beauty it is, does not impress me. It is not my style."

The other smiled good-naturedly. "I should like to know," she jested, "if Doctor Roettger thinks as you do, Thereschen; were I *he*, I should be head over ears in love with her."

Therese Krautner shrugged her shoulders. "Easily possible," she agreed.

The young lady looked mischievous. She was the only one engaged to be married among the girls and obtained from her fiancé all manner of news, and she could too, with impunity, sing Doctor Roettger's praises. "How you all courted the poor fellow at the Casino ball," she thus concluded a long speech; "and whosoever is the chosen one, is not to be envied, inasmuch as I think, that jealousy will not allow her to enjoy her privileges."

Thersechen looked sorrowfully at the speaker. "I did not know," she began.

"Oh, you were just as bad, you glady offered him a favor! the sparrows do not chirp from the roofs for nothing: all the girls love Roettger, Roettger!" Julia who was just fetching a buffet for one of the elderly ladies and did not hear this quotation, was forced to smile, when at the sight of her, all the girls put their heads together and whispered. Therese alone sat there like a statue. In the meantime the bell rang and the doctor's voice was heard saying: "A lamp, if you please." He had returned early nevertheless. Again these words could be distinctly heard: "Ask Fraulein Julia to come here a moment."

Miss Good-for-nothing, who had just placed her chair in the charmed circle, arose immediately and advanced to the door; it seemed as if something impelled her to glance at Therese, and when she, the knob in her hand, turned her head, she saw a pale face

with firmly compressed lips, and with eyes from which shot an almost hostile gleam. She returned this glance with one of astonishment and left the room. What, for heaven's sake, had so suddenly changed Therese?

As she entered his room, the doctor came hastily toward her. "Tell me, Julia, have you heard from Frieder?"

"No!" she replied.

"Then he is here himself; I may be mistaken, but I would wager that he passed me on the Bahnhof-strasse."

"Oh, no, Fritz, he is not coming until Christmas, and that is not for three weeks."

'I may, of course, be mistaken, child, but I thought I would tell you. And were it so, Good-for-nothing —have you any idea what brings him here?"

She turned crimson and made no reply.

"Are you in his confidence?" he asked.

"Yes, Fritz."

"Then, child, if you have any influence over him, see that the poor woman up-stairs is not exposed to any more excitement; it would not only be vain, as she cannot help him—but her physcial condition will not bear it."

She bowed her head. "Is it as bad as that?" she asked with an effort.

But before he could reply his mother's voice intermingled with cries of sympathy was heard in the front room, the door was burst open, and upon the threshold stood Frau Roettger, one arm around Therese Kruatner's form. The young girl looked pale and suffering; she had in some unaccountable manner stuck the crochet needle in her hand.

The doctor advanced in affright, and led the girl to a seat. Frau Roettger whimpered as if she had to bear the pain, one old lady, suggested tetanus, a third proposed sending for her father, until the doctor finally requested all to leave the room; Julia had already hastened out to obtain a jug of warm water.

When she returned with it, she paused at the door an instant, and a mist rose before her eyes. The needle had been taken out, but Therese's head leaned as if unconsciously upon her helper's shoulder and two large tears were trickling down her pallid cheeks.

On Julia's entrance Fritz carefully laid the fair head back upon the cushion; nor did he wipe away the tears, as he had once kindly done for Miss Good-for-nothing; he paced the floor with a pained expression upon his face, such as people have who feel doubly themselves the pain they are compelled to inflict on others. Julia did not know him thus, so sensitive and sympathetic, so put out on account of a "trifle," as he would have designated such a thing in another.

"Did it hurt very much?" she asked sympathetically.

"Why, of course!" he replied, taking the jug from her and mixing the water in it with carbolic acid. "Please get some soft linen—you know, outside in the cupboard, to the right!"

She went obediently, and when she returned the color was again in Therese's cheeks, and the tiny hand, which Fritz himself held in the water as tenderly as if it were Sevres china, no longer trembled. Afterward when it was being bound, Julia held the hand; for the first time she was found fault with: "Good-for-nothing, please—not so roughly!"

"What did I do?" she asked, looking up at him.

"You held the arm so tightly, just see those two red spots!"

"Ah, do not be angry!" she stammered in affright.

"Julchen," implored Therese, "fetch me my wraps, I would like to go home."

"J will accompany you," said the doctor eagerly. And he did not even take his overcoat, he merely put on his fur cap. Notwithstanding they stood for some time chatting at the door of Therese's home. Once the young girl laughed aloud; her laughter rang out so heartily and silvery in the dark garden. She must again have felt perfectly well.

"Good night," said Therese on parting, "I hope as a faithful physician you will to-morrow look after your worst patient!"

"Certainly—good night, Fraulein Therese!"

She offered him her right hand. "Good night, doctor!"

By the faint glimmer of the lamp in an elegant wrought iron stand upon the stairs, her sweet, child-like face looked so pleasantly up at him, and so winning, so innocent a smile played about her mouth, that he, to whom all exaggerated gallantry was foreign, stooped and kissed her hand respectfully and devotedly. Then he turned hastily and descended the stairs.

Therese opened the door and softly crossed the hall, to her room. There with her uninjured right hand she took off hood and cloak, turned up the gas and stepped to the mirror, which in crystalline clearness gleamed above the mantelpiece—she stood there, still smiling at herself, when steps crossed the corridor and simultaneously with a hurried knock the door was burst open.

The young girl thought it was her father and turned gayly in order—the next moment a slight exclamation of terror trembled through the luxurious little room.

"Friederick!"

The man who had entered was enough to frighten any one—pale, his fair hair matted on his brow and in his eyes, which were deeply sunken in his emaciated face, glowed a strange fire.

"I saw you come home," he began, approaching her, "and hastened to greet you. You are well, I see, and I might have spared myself the anxiety I suffered at your silence. But as I have come hither, I should like at least to go away as your acknowledged *fiance*; you cannot blame me, and it will be pleasanter for you than this secrecy. I pray you, therefore, go with me now to your father, or send for him, for all I care, that the affair may be ended!"

She retreated to the deep window niche, in which was her sewing table. Fear, his unqualified, resolute desire, the disagreeable consciousness of having played at fast and loose with him, almost rendered her beside herself. "Papa is not at home," she stammered.

"I will await him then."

He drew a chair to the fire-place. "Shall we not talk?" he asked with the same, unnatural composure.

"Oh, please go!" she now implored. "Come again to-morrow, I am not in the mood for talking." She pointed to her injured hand.

"Nothing was to be seen of it a few minutes ago," he replied, disregarding her formal manner of addressing him, "I heard your laughter ring through the whole garden; and even the draughty place in front of the house door seemed all right for you to chat in. Indoors, here, it is much more comfortable—so, if you

please! What you accord a stranger, you will surely not refuse your betrothed?"

While he spoke she drew nearer. "I am at home alone and must once more request you to leave this room!" she said, her voice trembling with agitation.

"Why so?" he asked. "We were alone in the summer house too, when we plighted our troth!"

"You are trying to threaten and frighten me!" cried she violently, and the tears, up to this time restrained gushed from her eyes.

He advanced and seized her hand. "You do not yourself believe what you say, child," said he. "You still love me as dearly as you did a few months since, when you promised me that in case your father should not consent to our engagement, you would go with me clandestinely."

"No! No!" cried Therese, snatching her hand from him, "I never said that, you are imagining it!"

"Fortunately I have it in writing! It was in one of your first letters and that passage comforted me in the last weeks of despair. Now, tell me, Therese, is your father still against our union?"

"He is as much so as ever. And I—"

"You?"

"I see, that he is right!" After these words she seated herself upon the lounge and looked away from him with the impatient expression of a woman who at any price would like to see an unpleasant conversation cut short.

"Therese, that is not true! You cannot be in earnest! Your love must still exist for me, your letters could not lie! You are no ordinary girl, you are above these Philistine prejudices, you are capable of defying the world and of becoming mine *without* your father's

consent. Try kindness with him once, and if it fails, then let us burn the ships behind us; there is still some spot in the world where we—"

"You propose," asked Therese Krautner with icy composure, "that I should secretly steal away from my father, and plunge into an uncertain, adventurous future?"

"Your father will, must later on, become reconciled—"

"I have no taste for romantic escapades," she interrupted. "I think it more beautiful here than anywhere in the wide world! In my eyes Andersheim is the loveliest town I know of. And now, please go; after what has been said it would be doubly annoying if the maid were to come and find you here."

"No!" said he passionately, "I will not go! You owe me an explanation; you have caused me to experience all the torture of disappointed expectation, of despair—now speak; why so suddenly this change?"

He drew nearer and laid his hand menacingly upon her shoulder.

Then she sprang up, beside herself. "Papa! Papa!" she cried, rushing out to the door. Heavy footsteps resounded in the hall, they advanced, and before the astonished man could collect himself, Herr Alois Krautner stood before him, but his smiling face changed on seeing the officer, as abruptly as when dark clouds suddenly float above a landscape flooded with sunshine.

"What do you want, sir?" asked the father to whom the daughter clung fearfully. "To what do we owe this honor?"

"I have already informed your daughter that I wish to speak with you," replied Adami, having quickly recovered his self-possession.

"He wanted me to elope with him; and I cannot do that!" interrupted the girl weeping.

"No, no, certainly you can not," said Herr Krautner, coldly.

"But now let me loose: trouble will come of such doings behind my back. Drink a glass of water and then cry it out alone! You, sir, will perhaps, for lack of the daughter, go with the father, only at present to my room, if you please! Here is the door—please, please, after you!"

And the round little figure made way for the pale young man with a correct bow which at any other time would have had a very comical effect; to-day neither of the spectators gave a thought to Herr Alois Krautner's serio-comic manner. In the hall the corpulent host walked on ahead as hastily and nimbly as if he had springs under his soles; he opened the door of his room. "If you please, have patience a moment, I have a few words to say to my daughter alone." With that he turned the old-fashioned oil-lamp a little higher and then left the room in order to return to Therese's boudoir. The girl tried to fling herself upon his breast, but he loosened her arms with an expression unusual to him.

"Pray, pray, now is no time for caresses; I only ask a few concise answers to the questions I put to you —sit down there! So! Now, number one—did you, notwithstanding my orders, engage yourself to Lieutenant Adami?"

A long pause, then sobs.

"Yes or no?"

"Yes, but I—"

"If you please, no excuse! Did you correspond with him?"

"Yes—yes—but I—"

"Did you promise to remain true to him?"

"Yes—but—"

"Be calm! And now you have changed your mind?"

"Yes!"

"Why?"

"Ah, dear papa," sobbed Therese, who now saw an opportunity to move her angry father's heart, "dear papa, because I could no longer bear to deceive you, because I learned to understand that you only desired my good."

"Very well, very well, we will talk of that later!" He passed through the door and returned to Lieutenant Adami.

CHAPTER XII.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

There was one room in the elegant villa which contrasted strangely with the rest. It was separated from the others, looked on the street, had two medium sized windows without fashionable curtains, in fact at the top of them hung on a cornice a simple material with ball-fring. The floor was of fir-boards scrupulously white, the stove of an uncommonly ugly shape and yellow. Here stood an old-fashioned sofa covered with black oil-cloth, in front of it an old clumsy table likewise covered with oil-cloth; here on the wall in a black, oval frame hung the photograph of a lady, holding a child upon her lap; in one corner stood an organ-sieve, in the other a writing-desk of birch-wood, and here stood the easy-chair in which Herr Alois Krautner had taken his afternoon naps, since he, as young master-mason began housekeeping with his Hannchen. In a word, it was the master's private room, the only one in which he felt comfortable, in which he felt "at home" in the summer in his shirt sleeves and in the winter in his dressing gown and night-cap; where he was daily reminded that he had arisen from a simple mason to a respected citizen. This room was his church in which he held a strange service; his temple of reminiscenses, for every article of furniture his beloved dead had shared in common with him. At this table they had, as young married

people eaten their first dinner and upon this sofa had they sat at evening when he returned home tired. And in this cupboard had been laid the first dollars saved with a pride which thrust in the shade the consciousness of later wealth.

In this room Lieutenant Adami sat upon the sofa. The real state of things was not quite clear to him. In his heart a hope still glimmered—if the father would allow himself to be softened? That Therese had really been untrue to him, his self-conscious mind could not comprehend. Her refusal was surely only fright at his unexpected appearance and his passionate haste! She must love him still, nothing else was possible! Were it not so, then—then all was at an end, then he would look into a fathomless chaos, and therefore the matter must not terminate unsatisfactorily, it must not!

He started up when Herr Krautner entered, and then sank into a chair as if crushed—no favorable signs were visible on the old gentleman's face. Herr Krautner took a chair, seated himself opposite his guest, drummed with his short, round fingers on the green oil-cloth and finally began, after cleaning his throat:

"My girl has not acted fairly toward you; Therese has, as they say, led you by the nose. I am grieved to find her up to such tricks, I always thought she was honorable and true like her mother. Well, the girls of to-day are different, and everyone is liable to make a mistake once. Had she written to you when she made the discovery: 'Sir, I see that father is right, we are not suited to one another,' that would have been proper; but as it is, I must confess, she is in the wrong. At this moment I feel certain that

had you married, a misfortune would have arisen. You must forgive her, lieutenant. Well—please, please, remain seated," he added soothingly, as Friedrich Adami was about to rise with pallid cheeks, "we are not yet through, I have still something to say to you."

The officer again sank back; the old man paused, a strange tremor passed over his face.

"I know you better than you think, lieutenant," he continued. "In the first place I can read men's faces a little, and secondly, I asked some one in Berlin—well, let me say, a good friend of mine—to occasionally send me word of your doings—do you understand? Although I rejected you, I always reckoned upon the possibility of the girl persisting in marrying you.

"After all I can only say I am pleased that Therese will no longer hear of a marriage with you, for—the reports of your priavte life are not very promising for my daughter's future husband! Of your work in your calling, however, they spoke with the highest praise, and it is a pity for any dashing officer to be obliged to quit the service on account of frivolous debts. You are upon the point of doing so, lieutenant!"

Adami sprang up. "Sir, what does that concern you?" cried he in a trembling voice, seizing his hat, which lay before him upon the table.

"Will you not allow me to finish? I was about to say: we, that is Thereschen, has done you a great wrong. Nothing is more unbearable to me than to go through life with the consciousness of having injured any one—my dram would not taste palatable, my afternoon nap would be disturbed and even my pleasure in my child would be gone. So I want to ask you to put confidence in me, in short, to confess to me frankly the amount of your debts."

Again Lieutenant Adami sprang up with the same words as before: "Sir, what does that concern you?"

Again Herr Krautner pushed the young man, who with a trembling hand wiped the perspiration from his pale brow, back into the corner of the sofa.

"Of course you can not—tell the exact sum; so I pray you write and send me the amount and name the creditors to me! I will come myself to Berlin and settle the matter—so, that is settled. But now I have a reciprocal condition: the girl over there no longer exists for you—do you see? I must have your word of honor. Furthermore I must insist that after your affairs are settled, you begin a different life—no more selst drinking, no expensive—I mean danseuses—do you understand? And cards! It is the advice of a man who means well. At bottom I should be indifferent as to what became of you; but, you see—" He hesitated, whistled a few measures, cleared his throat and continued:

"I can not forget the old lady whom you call your foster-mother. Several days ago I was walking on the promenade and met her. I had not seen her, as they say, by daylight for some time, and I was startled at the thousand wrinkles which she had brought on by grief on—your account, lieutenant, for the sparrows here twittered from the roofs that she has bit by bit given up her fortune for you. Julia is no drag on her, she lives like a bird on a few crumbs. And I recalled the days when I first saw her—when I worked at the house over there—a little, stupid apprentice. She was then a pretty, young girl, and I thought the Virgin Mary, when she was on earth, must have looked like her. She was not rememebred by me for her beauty alone, but because one day my father met with

an accident. I had no mother, and when the people came and called down into the cellar, for we were working there—'Alois, your father has been hurt, they are bringing him home dead!' all ran away to see the injured man, and I, poor boy, was suddenly left alone in the cellar and did not know scarcely what had happened—suddenly the beautiful young lady stood there and took the poor, dirty little apprentice in her arms, stroked his tangled, fair hair, in which hung lime and spider-webs, and said: 'Poor boy, ah, poor boy!' And you see, the—the—"

He broke off, blew his nose and continued sharply: "So, you know now—not for your sake, but—well, the matter is settled—until we meet in Berlin! See to it that you go away as secretly as you came, it is important for the sake of us all, that the matter be hushed up. Good evening!"

The door slammed and he had disappeared, leaving the officer to collect himself.

The latter took his hat and with lips compressed left the house, furious and ashamed, yet in the depths of his soul lurked a feeling of infinite relief.

In the darkness he passed his own home, below, alongside of the stream. In his aunt's room a light glimmered, a sensation of pity for the old lady was stealing over him, when he called himself to order. No sentimentality, no life in the so-called middle-way! A lieutenant's life with eighteen dollars allowance monthly—never! As he stood there and gazed at the windows, a resolution matured within him—Africa! Out into another world!

From the window of the railway-carriage he once more glanced at the tiny town and sought out the pointed tower of the Krautner's villa. "Oh, that girl!"

He clenched his fist, he had really been in love with the fair nixy and now!— In addition he was obliged to accept favors from a sentimental old fool, for there was no other means at hand! He lighted a cigar and the aromatic odor gradually soothed his choler. To be freed from his debts was indeed something to be appreciated, why grieve about the other?

The next noon he calmly went to dine at the Casino and two days later, simultaneous with his discharge, he handed in a petition for position as officer in the German army in East Africa.

"Why?" said his comrades "we thought you were going to be married?"

He stroked his mustache and replied carelessly: "I am not suited for a Philistine, that good fortune comes soon enough."

He drank his half-and-half and said, he must go to the station to meet an old uncle who had taken a fancy to see the sights of the town; he would therefore not sup there that evening. The old uncle was Herr Alois Krautner, who was to help the lieutenant settle up his affairs.

At half past eight o'clock upon the same evening on which Therese had broken her engagement—the young officer had scarcely left the Krautner estate—Julia's slender form crept cautiously out of the neighboring house; she carried a tray with a dish of cake and cream which she was to take to Therese from Frau Roettger with the sincerest wishes for the speedy cure of the injured member. Julia walked along the garden-path, where were to be still seen in the snow her brother's footprints, and had no suspicion that he had been there, that an important hour in his life had but shortly been lived through in this spot.

She entered the hall and no one appeared, she went over to Therese's door and knocked. But no hospitable "Come in!" was heard. So she turned the knob and thrust her dark head through the aperture. "May I come in?" rang cheerily in the ears of Therese, who was seated in one of the small chairs at the fire-place, her back turned to the door.

She now sprang up, and Julia saw a pale face with unnaturally bright eyes.

"What do you want?" asked Therese, harshly, unable to conceal her agitation; "I am tired and want to go to bed."

"How you look!" said Julia, not wounded in the least, for she saw she was suffering. "Are you in great pain?"

"Yes!"

Miss Good-for-nothing set down the tray and turned to go. "Wait, Therese, I will fetch the doctor!"

"I do not want him—for God's sake, stay!" was called after her, and Therese pulled her friend's dress with such vigor, that the gathers broke. "Pardon!" she stammered.

"Yes, what ails you, Thereschen, you are so terribly agitated!"

"Go to father," murmured the fair maiden, "and bid him come to me!"

Julia obeyed. She found Herr Krautner in his room; he sat in his arm-chair at the window, looking out into the dark, snowy garden.

"What do you want, little girl?" he asked gently, in a voice which sounded different from usual. Julia delivered Therese's message.

For a moment the old man was silent. "Tell her, if she wants to see me, she knows the way to me,"

said he then. "The child should come to the father, not *vice versa*! Unfortunately I neglected making this clear to her in time; from to-day on it will be different."

And when Julia looked at him interrogatively and in surprise he patted her cheek. "She had no mother, child, the old man looked upon the only thing left to him as one looks at a golden vessel, and worshiped the daughter as a Christ-child. It was not wise, it was not wise!" He shook his head.

"Are you coming, sir?" asked Miss Good-for-nothing once more, softly.

He rather rose from his chair, then said he again: "No, I shall not come!"

"Thereschen," said Julia to her friend, "I do not know what has transpired between you, but you are the child, go over to him, give him your hand!"

Instead of replying Therese began to sob bitterly. "No one wants to understand me, I can do right for no one! Even when I am ill and in pain, no one has any consideration for me. I shall not go, I shall not go to him; he has treated me as if I were a culprit, I had rather run away and never return, never!" Again she began to weep, until she was in such a state of excitement, that Miss Good-for-nothing once more hastened to implore the old gentleman to come over for Therese seemed to be really ill.

He came and approached the pale, trembling creature, who lay upon the sofa; carefully he spread the coverlet over the slender form, and his plain, usually so jovial face wore an exprsesion of sorrow and tenderness.

"Well, do not cry any more, as if the greatest wrong had been done you, do you hear?" he blustered. Take

warning from this! Your mother would not have done such a thing, she was so honest and upright. Be serious, and zounds! cease trembling, or you will be ill; I think it would be better to fetch the doctor, that he may—"

She again started up. "Not the doctor, not the doctor!"

"Well—no, no!" he soothed. "There, drink some sugar-water and go to bed; I will sit beside you then, until you fall asleep, and Julchen will help you to undress; I do not care to have your maid see your agitation."

Julia helped the still trembling girl to bed, the old man returned, seated himself beside his darling and prepared to guard her as a mother would.

Miss Good-for-nothing withdrew. Her eyes filled with tears, as she once more looked back at the girl who was half asleep, and who was so lovingly watched over. She did not know what had happened, but had it been the very greatest, severest trial, she who was the recipient of such love was to be envied.

"Happy Therese, who has a father and a lover!"

With difficulty she suppressed an exclamation of delight. Ah, she too had some happiness! There at the gate leading into the Krautner's garden, he stood awaiting her! His mother had surely told him that she had gone out.

"Well?" he asked, walking beside her. "How is she, Good-for-nothing?"

"Better!" she replied in a low voice. "She is asleep."

He nodded with satisfaction. They walked toward home in silence. The walk was indescribably beautiful.

"Sleep well, little one," said he in the hall wearily, with a suppressed yawn. He bowed and vanished behind his door.

"Good-night!" she murmured, ascending the stairs.

CHAPTER XIII.

A SUITOR FOR MISS GOOD-FOR-NOTHING.

It is very difficult for a youthful heart to lock up within itself that which moves, delights, grieves it. The impressions which a heart receives, threaten to cause it to burst, and other sympathetic hearts must help it to bear the weighty, blissful or painful incidents in the course of a first love. Rarely is the mother the confidante, it is almost always a friend, who also has a secret. Such girlhood friendship is a touching thing —always ready to comfort, to weep or to laugh, and always ready to discover wonderful things where perhaps another would see the purest prose.

Miss Good-for-nothing had no mother, and she, who had promised to take this place, had never been able to love her. The quiet child would never have dared even to hint to her pale, sad aunt, about anything that moved her. Therese Krautner was no friend to her in the true sense of the word; she particularly avoided all intimacy with Julia, since she became engaged to her brother, and Julia was much too proud to seek a friendship that was denied her. But in her loneliness of heart she suffered deeply, for she was naturally clinging and affectionate, and all her coldness and apparent lack of feeling were acquired, the result of a loveless youth. Only in the wonderful eyes could be seen the clear, sweet light which her soul hid; but these eyes were almost always veiled beneath

their blue-black lashes. To be sure, Frau Roettger called it "coquetry," for were the lashes suddenly raised and did Miss Good-for-nothing look another person full in the face, he would be startled by the rays which shone forth, betraying a depth of life, a fund of sensibility.

"Fortunately,' Frau Roettger was in the habit of saying, "she has no opportunity of exercising her dangerous art, for with the exception of Fritz she is thrown with no man, and Fritz is accustomed to it, it will not harm him—one might live for the longest time amid the finest scenery and be unaware of it. And besides her eyes there is nothing striking about the girl that could be called pretty; her black hair looks as if it were braided silk, and her complexion is as yellow as my antique lace."

Yet there was one in whom these eyes had awakened love, who at any price—Frau Roettger clasped her hands above her head—wished to marry the possessor of these eyes!

Miss Good-for-nothing herself had no suspicion that the love of a man was seeking her with ardent longing; she addressed the invalid, who daily with difficulty crossed the threshold of the waiting-room, leaning on the arm of a servant, as pleasantly as any of the other patients, perhaps still more so, for in the face of such suffering her heart overflowed with pity. Was there any greater misfortune than to be young, wealthy and yet to be prevented from enjoying life on account of a frail body? She, who appeared so composed and was yet so restless, who could not have existed without hastening three or four times every day through the garden to the river, to row in the summer with her dainty yet muscular arms, felt doubly

compassionate when she saw one who could only enjoy Nature from his invalid-chair. But her sympathy brought grief to one poor mortal's heart. He thought to have found in the beautiful, kind creature that which could reconcile him with life, and on this particular day at noon his mother appeared and required a private conversation with Frau Roettger.

She was a widow, a proud woman, who had never appeared in Andersheim society, and who lived a retired life with her son.

She was a very poor girl of an old French family when Herr Norban made her acquaintance, just after her father had lost his last penny at the gaming table and then shot himself in despair. This may have led her to give her hand to the plebeian suitor and to go with him as his wife to his fine villa on the Rhine. Fortunately this villa was separated from the factory by an extensive park; she did not care to be reminded that her lord manufactured "German Champagne," although it was some consolation to her to know, that Napoleon III., so it was said, had once wooed the lovely "Veuve Cliquot." But she was a woman of strong character, and in addition one sorely-afflicted. Her only son, her Alphonse, who was born with the brightest hopes, had since his boyhood been a cripple. When over-heated he had bathed in the Rhine, to be carried home paralyzed—a terrible blow to his mother, who, however, did not lose courage. She sought to fulfill her adored son's every wish, she gave him the best of educations, and when his father died in consequence of wounds received in the war against France —he had participated in the campaign as a reserve officer—she became not only her boy's sole comfort, but too a German; she never forgave her compatriots

for having robbed her poor boy of his father.

And this woman came to-day to propose for her beloved child for the hand and heart of little Miss Good-for-nothing.

For forty-eight hours she had in despair opposed this plan, her heart was well nigh broken. *She* had longed to be all to her only child, and the thought of having to share his love with another, was terrible to her. But finally she submitted, tormented only by the fear that the cripple might be scorned.

Frau Roettger's head swam when Frau Norban was announced; for the proud woman was not in the habit of paying calls. She now sat like a statue upon the sofa beside the lady, whose black mustache on her upper lip she saw near by for the first time, and whose sable-trimmed velvet mantle served to entirely turn Frau Roettger's brain.

"*Enfin,*" said Frau Norban, "Alphonse loves this young girl; he can offer her a great deal. A fortune —in case of his early death we would see that she was properly provided for—a position, the touching, grateful love of his kind heart. He—" she passed her hand over her eyes and wiped away a tear.

"Ah, I beg of you, madame," assured Frau Minna, "what girl would not be pleased, if your son— And he wants to *marry* Julia?" she interrupted, with a fresh access of astonishment, "to really marry her?"

Frau Norban cleared her throat. "I have come personally to speak for him, I should think the matter was clear. The young lady's aunt has always been described to me as inaccessible, therefore I have come to you, dear Frau Roettger."

"Oh, Lord," replied the latter, as if an unhoped-for gift had fallen in her own lap, "what good fortune for the child and for my poor sister!"

"Please arrange so that I can see the girl."

"Now? You do not even know Julchen?"

Frau Norban shook her head. "Only from my son's description."

Frau Roettger, as swiftly as her felt slippers would permit, hastened out of the room and up the stairs. Julia was up-stairs in her kitchen preparing oat-meal broth for Aunt Riekchen, who had become ill, on obtaining no news of her foster-son, and who was confined to her bed.

Like a storm-cloud Frau Roettger in her soft shoes, shot into the kitchen and, crimson with excitement, called to the terrified girl in a trembling voice:

"Hurry, put on another dress, wash your hands, someone is downstairs—" She gasped for breath. "Only be quick and come neat and pretty, do you hear?"

"What am I to do downstairs, aunt?" asked Julia calmly.

"A lady has fainted—fetch a glass of water!"

Frau Roettger herself thought this subterfuge extremely absurd, as she descended the stairs, but she could think of no other. Still gasping for breath she sat by the side of her caller, when the door suddenly opened and the young girl appeared with a plate upon which was a glass of fresh water. She had not changed her dress, for, according to her opinion the dress in which one hastened to assist a fainting person, was a matter of indifference, and so she came in her simple, dark woolen gown, her face flushed slightly from the kitchen fire.

Frau Norban, who had no idea that she had been described as in a swoon, raised her lorgnette and with surprise glanced at the odd but charming apparition.

She now understood all; she was aware of her son's ardent love of the beautiful, she herself had cultivated it. And this creature, this blooming beauty, he wanted for his own, poor boy! She dropped her lorgnette and lowered her eyes before those of Julia, who offered her the glass of water.

"Thank you, my dear child."

"Madame is better now!" cried Frau Roettger.

"Yes, but will you not be seated a moment?" continued Frau Norban with a slightly surprised air, as Julia turned to leave the room. "I should like," she added, drawing the girl to a chair at her side, "I should like to thank you. You do not know me, but I know you through my son."

"Yes, Frau Norban, I do know you," replied Julia. "Your son has often spoken to me of his mother."

"Has he?" she asked, coloring with delight. "He is a good boy, a good, noble boy, I, his proud mother, can say so. You should read his poems—would you like to? I will send them to you; you will learn to know his heart from them!"

Julia's eyes were downcast. "I shall be pleased," said she, in confusion. She felt that something unusual caused the lady to speak thus.

"And will you not visit me? Yes? That is kind of you. This afternoon?"

"I am sorry, madame, but my aunt is seriously indisposed to-day."

"Ah, nonsense!" interrupted Frau Roettger, "you can go very well, I will look after her; you will not always be able to stay with her!"

"You are a good child," said Frau Norban rising. "Not to-day then, but to-morrow I will take no refusal, I will send the carriage for you. And now farewell—until we meet again!"

She seized both of Miss Good-for-nothing's hands, and a melancholy smile trembled about her full lips, as she saw the sweet child-like embarrassment expressed upon her face. "Until we meet again, dear child— adieu, Frau Roettger!"

She advanced to the door. Julia stood there as if rooted to the spot, but Frau Minna hastened after her guest and conducted her across the court to her carriage. When she returned, the young girl was already ascending the stairs.

"Heavenly Father! The wooden thing was not even curious!"

"Wait a minute," she called out, that your aunt may not receive too great a shock!"

"Why a shock?" asked Julia, pausing.

The excited woman was already beside her. "Good Lord, have you no sense at all? Or do you only affect not to see the good fortune to be showered upon you?" She grasped the girl's hand and pushed her through the door of Aunt Riekchen's bedroom. Then she called to her terrified sister, her arms akimbo:

"Riekchen, now look at her, just look at her! Neither of us would have dreamed of it—ah, heavens, I must sit down!"

The nervous invalid sat up suddenly in bed. "What is it?" she asked with difficulty, and her eyes were turned with veritable horror upon the pallid girl, in whom arose a vague suspicion that this matter concerned her future.

"You need not be frightened, you will be relieved from your troubles all at once, Riekchen! Only fancy, this silly, little goose has had a stroke of good-luck such as no other girl in the town has had—an offer of marriage, one which is not to be scorned—what do

you say to it, Riekchen? Alphonse Norban wants her!"

A slight, anxious cry vibrated through the room simultaneous with the lady's last words. Then silence followed. The two sisters gazed at Miss Good-for-nothing who still stood upon the same spot, erect, her head thrown back, deathly pale. A shudder shook her frame.

"It is not true!" at length came from her quivering lips.

"Not true? Yes, it is difficult to believe, but it is true nevertheless! His mother especially commissioned me to talk with your aunt about it."

"But, Minna, he is—he is—"

"Leave the room!" Frau Roettger interrupted, turning to Julia. "And do you, Riekchen, cease your sentimentality! To be sure, he is delicate—but is he to have no wife on that account."

"Not me!" came from Julia's lips. She stood still and spoke calmly and circumspectly. "Not me!" she again repeated.

"You will consider it well," said Frau Roettger. "But first I wish to speak with you, Riekchen; leave the room, Julia!"

"I should like to remain!"

"Let her stay," said the invalid, sinking back among her pillows with a sigh, "it is her affair, and I do not want her to think I am interfering in something which she alone has to decide."

"No one can talk with you! You are probably awaiting the Grand Mogul? As if the opportunity would again be present to even provide respectably for such a Miss Lack-penny! For heaven's sake, child-consider into what circumstances you are marrying!

They will set you in a veritable fairy-nest, the poor fellow is desperately enamored of you, and what pleases him, pleases his mother likewise. Just fancy, how free from care your life would be there as a respected wife. You can travel, see the world, have your charming house, your theater box in Weisbaden and your carriage; you will be cared for, guarded and waited upon like a princess; not a trial will come to you, while they await you otherwise on every hand. Or do you think it so easy to go through the world as a poor girl, to be driven from pillar to post? For you cannot delude yourself into believing that you will be here much longer. Had I been in your place long ago I could not have seen my poor aunt grieving herself to death over my unprovided-for future. You should fall upon your knees and thank God, for sending an expedient out of all this perplexity and for giving you an opportunity to repay in some measure the poor creature there—" she pointed to the sick woman—"for what she has done for you. Look at it from this side, you will then think differently!"

During this speech Miss Good-for-nothing's head sank lower and lower, her arms hung at her sides, her eyes were dim; she felt as if an icy hand were pushing her back, constantly farther back from the bright, peaceful sunshine into the blossomless, dreary winter. She did not want to go. She clung to what had been her stay, she clung firmly to it with her anguish-rent heart.

"Ah, I will do anything to help aunt, but not that, not that!"

"You will do anything? That is idle talk!" exclaimed Frau Roettger. "What would you do? Would you seek a position? You would scarcely earn your

salt, others do not. And what else could you be? Does nursing pay? You would do better to nurse your own husband, then you would know what you have."

"But I do not *want* to!" cried the girl suddenly. "Cease, I do not *want* to, aunt!"

"Why not?"

"Because I do not love him!"

"No one asks that. Is that the only reason? You know, it is out of fashion, it is absurd, at least in your position very absurd."

Miss Good-for-nothing slowly turned her angry eyes upon Aunt Riekchen. She *must* understand her surely, for she too had remained true to her lover and had rejected all others, even after he had deserted her.

"Help me!" besought her glance. But hastily she averted her head; from the bright, feverish eyes a prayer went out to her heart, an ardent, anxious prayer, which said so plainly, ah, so plainly: "If you could decide!"

With a contemptuous gesture the girl turned and went out. Now she sat in her tiny room, her hands clasped in her lap. What was to be was not quite clear to her, only one thing was she conscious of, he would help her, he would finally, say: "Cease your tormenting—she is mine, mine for ever!" If he would only come, he stayed away so long to-day!

She could hear Frau Roettger's voice; she must be speaking very loudly and very eagerly. She did not think of dinner to-day. This proposal had had the effect of a thunderbolt and had upset all order.

The door of the next room was slammed and Frau Roettger hastened across the hall; her footsteps could not be heard, but her angry muttering was audible. Then all was still.

At length the young girl remembered that the invalid had not yet had her soup, and hastened to take it to her. Aunt Riekchen lay with her hot, aching head upon her pillow and would not eat; she impatiently warded off the hand which sought to take hers.

"Go, go," said she, "I do not wish to see or hear anything of it all, I have but one desire—I would, I were dead!"

Miss Good-for-nothing did not dare to utter a comforting word; she now knew that her aunt was angry because she did not grasp the first opportunity to rid the house of her burdensome presence. She crept away and gazed out of the hall window across the court, to see if he, who was to protect her, were not coming. But the snowy court was deserted and the whole house as silent as death. Frau Roettger was no doubt trying to rest after the excitement of the forenoon. Julia did not remember ever having seen the old lady so agitated, so vexed. What could it matter to her, if she, Julia, was rich or not? Then before the girl's eyes rose the pale, sunken face of the man, who desired her for his wife. Those features so ashen, so transparent, so mortally ill; and a shudder stole over her, a feeling of resistance bordering on disgust. Would he but come!

Suddenly she heard the bell below ring, very softly; he usually came thus, if he thought his mother was sleeping. The next moment she was on the stairs and ran through the hall into the waiting-room. He was just removing his overcoat and scarcely glanced at Miss Good-for-nothing, who advanced with a pale face and hands tightly clasped.

"Fritz," she began, and now where she thought she was the surest, she lost her with difficulty-maintained

composure. "Fritz, you told me, in the summer, if any one wanted to harm me—I should find protection with you. Now I pray you, help me!"

"Come, Julia, it is cold here," he replied calmly, leading the way into his study. "Certainly I will help you, if you need help. What has happened? Have you, poor little thing, been scolded again, have you broken some of my mother's china, or what is it?"

With those words he took a stethoscope and a roll of bandages from his coat, seated himself in his arm chair at the table and pointed with a smile to the chair beside it. "Well?" he then asked.

Julia gazed fixedly in his face, and it occurred to her that he looked different from usual, so much graver and yet glorified; she was familiar with the quivering of the muscles in his face which denoted inward agitation. Ah, she had never noticed but this one face in the world!

"Well?" he asked again.

"You must explain to aunt and your mother, that under no conditions will I marry Herr Norban," said she quickly.

He turned and stared at her. "Child, if I did not know you were a perfectly rational and composed little creature, I should think you were not quite right in your head; no one will require such a thing of you!"

"Nevertheless it has been required of me—Frau Norban was at your mother's to-day and asked my hand for her son."

He laughed incredulously; but when he saw her serious face twitch with pain, he cried, springing up: "That is an absurd thought, pure madness! But calm yourself, child, I am still here! And there comes mother! Now be good and do not tremble, child!"

Frau Roettger started on seeing the young girl. "It is to be hoped you will present the state of affairs clearly to her!" said she crossly.

"I have done my best, by telling her, that I would consider it shameless, were she to marry a walking corpse for the sake of worldly advantage. Fortunately, she seems to entertain no thoughts of it." He spoke very calmly, took a couple of pamphlets from one place in the table and laid them in another and continued: "I shall go to Frau Norban afterward to thank her formally for this proposal and to tell her that I am prepared to treat her son, but *not* here, between their own four walls; and in case he requires a companion and nurse, he needs only to advertise in one of the principal papers—there are hundreds of them. And by this means we and they will be helped out of this. Had you anything more to say, mother?"

No, Frau Roettger had nothing more to say, she could not have expressed her opinion, even had she wanted to, for her throat was contracted by her son's concise explanation. She left the room in silence, and within for a while nothing could be heard but the rattling caused by the banging of the door.

Then a low sob was audible. Miss Good-for-nothing's face was buried in her hands, and while a nervous tremor caused her to shudder, she articulated unintelligible words. In affright he sought to quiet her; he had never seen her weep, not even when a child, and had formerly often wondered at her fixed appearance. This outburst of deep inward agitation touched him; he leaned toward her in order the better to understand what she wanted, in order to find out what still oppressed her. The sisterly confidence placed in him by the girl moved him, he gently raised her

head and laid his right hand soothingly upon her hair.

"Julia," he implored, "be calm; you know now, the matter is arranged. In every mortal there is a goodly portion of selfishness, in the poor invalid who wants to marry you, there is a double, a sinful allowance. You must not blame him, he has been spoiled by his mother, he has always been in the habit of having what he wants. But this time his wish will not be gratified, for my little comrade shall never be sacrificed to this selfishness."

Still from beneath the girl's lashes the tears continued to trickle. She dreaded what was to follow, the eternal reproaches, the life which after this occurrence would be more comfortless than ever; and the yearning for security, for affection, for love, for the one heart that understood her, was at this moment stronger than ever. She raised her tear-stained face, her hands were clasped and her lips moved. He put his ear to her lips, in order to hear the soft whisper, and he heard distinctly what she was saying, so distinctly that his heart almost stood still with affright.

"Oh, do not leave me so terribly alone, Fritz! Tell them, that you—that we both—that we"—

He did not let her finish. "Julia," said he aloud as he rose, drawing the girl with him, "Julia, consider!" And as at the same moment the rosy light of shame flitted over her face, he drew her to him and said in a trembling voice: "Julia, my poor, little sister, you are not deserted, you will never be, and as a proof of how your old playmate loves you, he will confide something in you. But come, sit down by my side—" and he drew her down beside him on the sofa. "I will confide something to you, which I have

scarcely dared as yet to confess to myself, not even yesterday, and which I can tell no one but you, my little comrade. Julia—I—"

He paused suddenly and sprang up. It was a terrible poison he was about to employ as a means of cure, possibly life-destroying; and the words would not pass his lips, although he assured himself that this was the only means that would be of any avail. Then he returned resolute and stopped before the girl, who sat unnaturally still upon the sofa, a perplexed smile about her mouth. "Julia, I love, and since this morning I know I am loved in return. I know, you—you—you too will love Therese as a sister, as my wife—"

He had not foreseen such an effect! A truly petrified countenance stared at him and a cry, so shrill and sad, smote on his ear, a cry more bitter than he had ever heard.

"No!" she cried, "No, do not say that—not Therese! For God's sake, say it is not true!"

She was upon her knees before him, undone by fear and pain. He had never believed the shy girlish creature capable of such mad passion as spoke from the large eyes, from the tone of the voice, from the trembling of her limbs. "Julia!" cried he, impatiently, retreating a step.

She did not rise. "Fritz, I pray you—you must not —she must not—if you do not know—Great God, it can not be possible!"

A rough hand dragged her from the floor. "Do not forget all propriety?" cried Frau Roettger, who had heard the girl's exclamation in the hall, "shame on you! Here girls do not fall upon young mens' necks —do you hear?"

And as Julia raised her hands to her temples and

stood there as if awakening from a terrible dream to still more terrible reality, Frau Roettger continued: "Yes, shame on you! But I suspected long ago that you were in love with Fritz, only I did not want to say so!"

With these words she again tried to seize the girl's arm to lead her out. But she grasped space; Miss Good-for-nothing had fallen unconscious upon the floor, and the doctor bore her to the sofa.

"Great God!" exclaimed his mother, "what have I always told you, there is something abominably common in this girl."

"Mother," said he trembling, as he busied himself with the fainting girl, "if I did not know that you did not mean what you say—oh, God, I would be vexed with you! Be kind enough to fetch some wine and to hand me the ether over there!"

"Well," said Frau Roettger, as with composure she fetched the articles required, "her mother did just the same, and like father, like son. I am only pleased at one thing, that I accidentally discovered that you and Thereschen love each other, it will gladden my last days—she is coming to," she added.

It was so. Slowly Julia sat up. With a silent gesture she evaded the doctor's hand and support, then she went unsteadily through the room to the door. A strange smile played about her mouth.

Up-stairs Julia lay quietly upon her bed; she did not clearly realize what she was doing, she only felt that something was different within and about her. She put her hand to her heart, which ached, and as she did so she smiled again. No one came to look after her; who should indeed?

Some time had elapsed since Julia pale and trem-

bling ascended the stairs, when Aunt Riekchen's little maid rushed into Frau Roettger's sitting-room. There in the corner by the greenish stove among the cushions sat a pretty, fair girl, looking down with bright blue eyes at the man who held her hand and softly pressed a kiss upon it.

"Then, when you return from the South, Therese," he had just said, "I can speak to your father?"

"Yes," she replied. "I wish to let him enjoy our trip to the full, for if he knew that he was traveling in my society for the last time, he would always look upon Nice with a feeling of melancholy. "But," she added, shaking her finger menacingly, while she smiled at him, "do not be impatient, please!"

"I will wait, as you desire, Therese; I am so grateful to you for giving me this hour to-night."

Therese looked at him in surprise; she was pleased that he did not insist upon speaking to her father that day, she would enjoy her freedom once more to her heart's desire. She had not thought it would be so easy to carrry out her will. And now the doctor did not even make an attempt to claim his happiness to himself by means of golden rings and engagement notices! He sat before her as quietly and with as much composure as a man who has been married for years and who needs not to worry about a possible loss.

"Are you a bit jealous?" she jested.

"Jealous? No! I always think jealousy is insulting to the one we love; it shows a lack of confidence."

For an instant she bit her under lip with her little white teeth, then she laughed.

Just then the servant from upstairs rushed into the

room with a frightened air. "Doctor, come quickly, Fraulein Julia is ill, she talks all the time to her brother who is not there at all."

He sprang up and ran out, without apologizing to Therese.

"What is the matter with Julia and Frieder?" asked Therese, uneasily approaching Frau Roettger, who sat like a statue on the sofa before the lamp, apparently so engrossed in her calendar that she saw and heard nothing.

"I do not know, my darling," replied the fortunate mother-in-law. "She may be delirious, she was not at all well to-day at table."

But Therese seemed to have no desire to enter into a conversation with the old lady; she paced the room in silence.

Fritz came back. "She is very ill, mother," said he, "I fear it will prove to be brain fever; until I obtain a nurse, I wish you would remain with her."

"Is she unconscious?" asked Therese.

"Unfortunately, unfortunately!"

And when his mother had gone, he clasped his betrothed in his arms and looked gravely in her eyes.

"Now come, I will take you home, I must then go back to the sick girl. But first, let me say farewell. Until we meet again, my darling one!"

His eyes were dim as he kissed her—for the first time. At the door of the villa he once more took the pretty face between his hands. "God grant we may meet again!" said he tenderly, then he left her.

Up-stairs in the tiny sick-chamber Miss Good-for-nothing in her delirium was whispering with her brother.

"Ah, Frieder, we two—we two!" said she just as the

doctor entered. "Ah, Frieder, we two! But you will forget it, you are a man, you have too a thousand more —but I—I had only the one—" and she laughed.

"What does she want with Frieder all the time?" whispered Frau Roettger, putting on another ice compress.

He shrugged his shoulders and seated himself by the bed of his little comrade. And so he sat still, when early in the morning the shrill whistle of the locomotive was heard through the window—it was the train bearing his fiancée toward the South.

Therese was reclining on the seat of a first-class coupé. The old gentleman was again asleep; he generally slept during the ride, but beforehand he had carefully wrapped his little daughter in a rug and put her tiny feet in their furlined shoes on the seat opposite.

She was not asleep but stared with tired eyes into the darkness of the December morning. But when by degrees day with its cold, gray lights dawned, she shivered and yawned. The world seemed to her so terribly prosaic, since yesterday she felt so terribly serious, and yet she had just attained the height of her wishes, upon the fulfillment of which, she thought the happniess and peace of her life depended—Doctor Roettger had confessed his love to her. The unrest had left her, her ambition was gratified, and yet! She yawned again—that disagreeable, early rising!

Half dreamily she ran over the events of the past few days. How opportunely Julia's illness came; otherwise she might have talked too much. So they suspected nothing and when she returned in the spring, then—well, then a great deal of water would have flown down the Rhine. For the time being

she could comfortably enjoy the Carnival at Nice.

She laid her pretty head upon the cushion and once more thought with satisfaction, that the man about whom all the unmarried ladies of the town raved, was hers. Then she pictured her future domestic life; the old, interesting house could be so stylishly furnished, it contained such fine rooms. His mother and aunt could surely not remain there, as little as Julia. The large court buildings and the stables would be admirably adapted for the servants, for coach houses and stalls, the court itself could be remodeled like a mediæval castle-court, and provided with a square, a sundial, a fine fountain and so forth. The garden—it contained finer old trees than did Thereschen's own garden—and the gondola, no a couple of gondolas, then one could give fairy-like garden-parties. The young girl's eyes closed, she was asleep!

CHAPTER XIV.

SUNSHINE THAT MAKES DARK SHADOWS.

The bright spring sunshine greeted Miss Good-for-nothing with its dazzling light, as for the first time after her illness she crept down the stairs, to obtain a few breaths of fresh air. She clung timidly to the balusters; she lacked the supporting, careful hand, such as is offered to convalescents even the poorest, she had to depend upon her own feet—if they had only not been so feeble! But who should help her? Her aunt was herself so miserable that she required a support, and Frau Roettger? She had, since Julia was out of danger and out of bed, scarcely awarded a glance. Since she had made the "improper scene," the "good-for-nothing hanger-on" did not exist for her. But Fritz, Fritz was as kind as ever—and yet how different. Ah, indeed, everything was changed!

The young girl now crept into the garden. In the broad walk lined with vines the sun burned through the bare branches, and in the border on both sides of the beech-lined road bloomed blue and yellow crocuses.

The perfume of violets filled the air and there was a brownish shimmer on the boughs of bushes and trees.

The stream was greatly swollen, the island was under water. Julia looked upon all this as if in a dream, the air had a stupefying effect upon her, for she had not been out of doors for months. Suddenly

she was forced to lean against the trunk of the nut-tree; as if through a veil she still saw the glittering stream and the awakening life of Nature.

Upon the Krautner's villa a flag was just being hoisted on the gayly painted staff. Julia followed it with languid eyes; how merrily it floated up there! No one had told her, but she knew, it was the welcoming greeting to those returning this day from the South.

A sharp pain darted through the girl's breast. She said to herself that Fritz had probably omitted his visit to her room because he did not wish her to see his delight.

She clenched her teeth, and, angry with herself, shook her head. What did she want? It was all right—might he experience the happiness in the possession of Therese which he expected! The trying time until her complete recovery would pass too, and then she could leave the house, could make herself independent—and all, who were left behind, would probably bless the moment when she closed the door behind her. Oh, how fine it must be to own a beloved, cozy home, a spot in which one could always be welcome, where were true hearts, open arms, hands that blessed one, that shared with one their last bit of bread. How easy a life had a man like Frieder—yes, where was Frieder at this moment?

He had one day briefly informed his aunt that he was weary of the monotonous duty of the garrison, that he had asked for his discharge, and at the same time applied for a commission in the German army in East Africa. As soon as he received his commission he would come to bid her good bye. So between Christmas and New Year he had indeed spent four-

and-twenty hours there, to bid the old lady farewell. Julia did not remember if he had pressed her hand on departing, for at the time her fever was at its height. But from that moment Aunt Riekchen was completely crushed, all her thoughts were centered upon the distant land, all her prayers asked protection for the beloved foster-son, who, obeying his love of adventure, would certainly be murdered by the savages. At any rate all was as he wished it; he left the army to prove his strength in distant lands, and when he left the house that had been his home, he went away with the old lady's last ready-money and left behind him a heart heavy and ready to break.

Had he heard of Therese's infidelity? Was that the cause of his turning his back on Europe? About this Julia was not clear herself, but one thing she was positive of, that as a happy lover he had shown no such interest in German-Africa. At any rate Julia had told no one that Frieder and Therese were engaged. She had no right to, she said, and in the face of the established fact of another, and an acknowledged courtship, she would only have occasioned complications, have destroyed the peace of a heart, the dearest to her on earth, perhaps have blighted his happiness, and that she must never do. She had victoriously suppressed the constantly recurring warning: "Tell him, she has just broken faith with another." The reason which impelled her to disclose Therese's character to him did not seem to her sincere and pure enough. Yes, had she been his sister! But she was nothing more than a girl who loved him, loved him so far above all else, that it was not alone pure, honest care for his welfare, it was something of which she herself was ashamed, together with a violent, passionate grief and bitter, devouring jealousy.

So she was silent—silent, when he sat by the bed in the days when consciousness gradually returned, when with an anxious air and a compassionate expression in his eyes he held her trembling hand; silent, when she learned from Frau Roettger that the doctor's engagement would be announced immediately after Therese's return. She did not cry out, "The girl you love is faithless, faithless in the innermost depths of her heart! She only accepts you, as she buys a new gown—because it is the fashion!" She compressed her lips and feigned to be asleep, only that *he* would go, that she need not see the beloved face.

It was almost a wonder that under such inward struggles she convalesced, that she again stood in the air and sunlight, that she saw the standard floating there so merrily. Miss Good-for-nothing followed every turn of the flag waving in the spring air, and then she saw over the low wall through the bare boughs the coachman and housemaids, who amid loud laughter fastened an enormous wreath of flowers above the door, she saw Frau Roettger in person advance to these people to entrust to them a dainty little basket of flowers, probably to be a greeting of welcome in Therese's boudoir!

Slowly Julia again walked toward the house, her strength was exhausted. Through the sunny air now came the full tones of the church bells; all three were rung, as if announcing a great fête day, and yet their chime was mournful. Julia knew those tones —some weary mortal, but one who was classed among the favored ones of earth—was being laid to rest.

With difficulty she pushed open the heavy oaken door and entered the dark hall, just as Frau Minna

entered from the other side. The latter made no pretense of seeing the pale girl; she hastened into the kitchen and called to Luischen from the threshold: "Young Norban is just being buried. Great Lord, if he had at least but left some one to inherit his wealth; now the old mother is left alone with all the money!"

"Yes, yes!" murmured Luischen, "if Fraulein Julchen had taken him—what a rich widow she would now be and how she could enjoy life—and what has she now?"

Miss Good-for-nothing smiled as she slowly ascended the stairs. Yes, what had she now? Nothing, nothing at all! And yet—she had herself and the consciousness of having acted right, and—her grief for him.

Julia did not see Fritz that day for the first time. He sent her up a couple of oranges and a book. She must excuse him for not coming to-day, he had so much to do.

She sat by the window, looked at the river, counted the ships, gazed at the sun which set in a purple splendor, and said to herself: "Now they are coming."

Downstairs on the ground floor all was still, even Frau Roettger did not seem to be at home. Perhaps they were celebrating the betrothal to-day, perhaps Therese had already confessed to her father by the blue sea, that she loved Fritz Roettger, and asked him if he approved of this son-in-law. And Julia pictured the old man's beaming face and fancied she heard his hearty laughter: "Yes, little daughter, he, he—for God's sake—you have chosen well!"

Then Therese telegraphed—to be sure, so it was—and now the couple clasped each other in a close em-

brace and Papa Krautner and Mamma Roettger shed tears of emotion, while Fritz kissed his betrothed.

What a terrible palpitation of the heart suddenly attacked Julia! And Zrip! Zrip twittered the birds without, flying about their cage. On the bank of the Rhine Aunt Minna's servant stood with her lover and mischievously sprinkled a handful of water in his face, when he attempted to kiss her; her merry laughter could be heard in the house. The couple spent the hour in the sunset, laughing and chatting, and when finally Luischen turned toward the house with the basket full of freshly washed spinach on her head, they called out another "Auf Weidersehen!" and soon after Julia heard the girl singing cheerily in the kitchen. She herself sat there, with an expression of the greatest languor, but still with the quiet smile about her lips, until the sunset glow faded away, until the door below was closed and Frau Roettger's steps ascended the stairs to die away in Aunt Riekchen's room. Then she rose and went over. Certainty, certainty she must have, for until the last mortals believe in magic, even though they do not acknowledge it to themselves.

She reached the door which was ajar, just in time to hear Frau Roettger say, "And you cannot imagine how happy both are; like children, Riekchen, like little angels, and the old man vies with his daughter in attention to Fritz, the wedding is to take place in May! Ah, God, this is indeed a gleam of sunshine after so long a time of trial!"

Aunt Riekchen said softly: "I envy you, Minna, God knows, I envy you!"

Miss Good-for-nothing, however, did not enter; she returned to her room. All was then quiet within,

only occasionally was a sigh audible, a sigh almost of relief—and for the first time she slept again in the night.

Certainty had come; peace stole over her, the fixed peace of denial.

CHAPTER XV.

MISS GOOD-FOR-NOTHING ENGAGES TO LEAVE HER OLD HOME.

One can accomplish much by means of a firm will, one can even become well, and Julia wanted to be well. At no price would she have liked to be present at the marriage celebration, she must leave the house before hand. No one opposed her determination to go out into the world; circumstances had helped to make her presence more "good for-nothing" than ever.

Therese's wishes, to occupy the entire house alone, were not to be fulfilled. Before Herr Krautner could buy the property from Fraulein Riekchen Trautmann, another purchaser had been quietly found, in the person of Doctor Roettger himself; and he could not be induced, as much as he loved his betrothed, to put his mother and aunt out of the old homestead.

"My dearest," said he gravely to Therese, "mother and aunt will live together downstairs; mother in her old rooms, aunt in the three next to my waiting and consulting rooms. The door connecting them I will have sealed up. In this way aunt will have her own province and I mine adjoining. But up-stairs in the cozy rooms happiness will enter and remain with us. Up there you shall reign as a queen, shall arrange your kingdom according to your own taste. Below all will remain as it was."

No entreaties, no flattery, no pouting availed, and Therese deferred her victory until after the wedding.

She would yet carry out her will, she thought.

In the old future the two sisters were to keep house together, and at the beginning of April Julia tried her scarcely regained strength for the first time and helped Aunt Riekchen arrange the rooms below, for up-stairs, masons, carpenters and laborers of all kinds were expected, to prepare the apartments for the occupancy of the doctor's wife. No one asked Julia if she were not undertaking too much, only Fritz said, as he glanced into the room, in his hand a bouquet of blooming anemones, which he was taking to his betrothed: "Do not overtax yourself, Good-for-nothing—what will you have gained, if you are again laid up? Are you still taking your wine of iron."

She nodded absently, and he went away.

He spent almost every leisure minute in the Krautner villa. He avoided appearing before Julia's eyes with his bride, and was more fully conscious than ever of the pain he had caused her—yet this consideration wounded Julia and her pride angrily rebelled against it.

In the midst of the removal Herr Krautner came and seated himself in all the confusion quite comfortably beside Aunt Riekchen on the sofa, which had just been placed against the wall; he watched in silence the way in which the pale, almost emaciated girl worked, in order to render it somewhat more easy for the old lady, so that she would not so greatly miss the familiar rooms.

"Now, see here, dear sister-in-law," he addressed Aunt Riekchen thus since the engagement, "Fritz told me lately that the little girl over there is looking for a situation?"

"Yes, I am looking for one," replied Julia.

"Hm! Then this time you will not have far to look! Come to me, I will treat you as my own child! I cannot live without a soul, I must have someone, who will greet me pleasantly when I come home in the evening; and especially, when Thereschen goes away—" he blew his nose violently —"I could not stand it at all alone in that great house. Well, what do you say, Fraulein Julchen, will you come to me?"

Aunt Riekchen glanced at him with surprise and gratitude and prepared to speak. But Julia anticipated her:

"I thank you sincerely, Herr Krautner, but with you I should be spoiled and that will not do for me. I must go through life independently, I will go away among strangers, far away."

"Spoiled? I spoil no one, and least of all you, Miss Good-for-nothing. I will not take you as an experiment, I want you forever, until someone takes you away or until I close my eyes. Nor does Alois Krautner desert folks in death—do you see?"

She approached him and emotion trembled upon her lips. "Thank you very much," said she, "but I can not, I accepted a position yesterday."

Aunt Riekchen started up "And I did not know it?" she cried.

"Pardon, aunt, I should have told you to-day."

"Where? As what?" asked the old lady with as much vexation as if she were the most careful mother.

"I have announced myself as a candidate for a course in sick-nursing at Cologne."

"Sick nursing—you? And you did not wish to even nurse your own husband?"

The girl turned pale to her lips. "I did not fear

the sick man," said she aloud. "Had his mother asked me to come to him as a nurse, I should have gone at once. I dreaded being chained to him by bonds into which one only enters when one—"she blushed deeply—"when one loves another devotedly and the love is requited. I had rather have died than have walked to the altar beside his invalid chair, I—"

"Bravo!" cried Herr Krautner. "There she is right, sister-in-law, and I can but assure you that all girls do not think thus at the present day. For the sake of the poor fellow's money-bags hundreds would have said 'Yes' and would have buried their fresh youth in the sick-chamber, or not even that—they would have let him sit there alone and have amused themselves somewhere else. But to take up the struggle with life requires courage, and to nurse the sick, dear child, the greatest courage, have you considered that too? It is a difficult task!"

"Certainly I have considered it, and very carefully," she replied. "Should I," she continued, "swell the army of those who seek their bread 'as the housewife's aid,' or should I convert into money my mediocre talent for painting? Or should I try the position of a governess, when thousands are vainly seeking situations? I think there can not be too many nurses who go seriously into their work. And the more sensitive the person who approaches the sick-bed, so much the more beneficial will the effect be upon the sufferer. I think thus, and, Fritz agreed with me once—when —I was still helping him with his patients."

Fraulein Riekchen said no more; she had turned away and was gazing yearningly at a couple of pictures hanging on the wall. She did not know what it

was, but something in the girl's words struck her for the first time in all the years she had known the child, and reminded her of her father. It was probably the way of expressing herself or else her gestures. The girl had never talked so much either.

"Well," said Herr Krautner, rising, "all respect to your decision! If, however, it proves to be more arduous than you thought it would be, if your strength proves insufficient, then, little girl, then, you must remember where old Krautner lives—give me your hand upon it! And if I am ever ill, no one else shall tend me! Well, my prayers have been in vain. Adieu!"

Julia went about her work and Fraulein Riekchen watched her, but neither spoke. Only when at length Julia sat exhausted at the window and the room looked quite home-like, for the girl had managed to hang every picture as nearly as possible in the same place as it had hung up-stairs, this question fell upon her ears: "When have you to be at Cologne?"

"On the fifteenth of May, aunt."

"Can you not remain here to the wedding? It is to be on the twentieth!"

"No, aunt; I am sorry, but I can not," answered the girl.

Then she rose hastily and went out.

CHAPTER XVI.

NATURE AND LOVE SMILED.

But six days until Therese's and the doctor's wedding, Julia's last day in her home!

Already a holiday air reigned in the old house. The workmen's noise had subsided, the servants from the Krautner's villa, as well as the servants of the future man and wife had cleared away their last traces, and as bright as a jewel-case the upper floor awaited its young mistress.

The grandeur indeed began below in the hall. The venerable flagging of red brick which for years had announced to the occupants the changes in the weather —a few days before a rain-storm it was already damp —had disappeared and a dazzling mosaic of black and white marble had taken its place, so gleaming and smooth, that Frau Roettger slipped about on it like a skater, who tries to skate for the first time. Over it was stretched as far as the stairs, prettily plaited straw matting, and every now and then against the artistically decorated walls stood old German carved benches; the window on the landing no longer simply admitted the daylight—which gleamed bright with many colors through the small panes covered with arms, and the sunbeams played in glowing lights upon the soft carpet which covered the dark stairs.

Frau Roettger was struck dumb with admiration, everything too looked so fine. She had only one trial—

her stubborn son would not allow his waiting and consulting rooms to be furnished with such luxury. He said he felt at home with the comfortable, old-fashioned furniture, and he did not want a half penny spent for stylish furniture for himself; he hoped and believed too, that his patients would miss nothing of the kind.

His mother submitted with a sigh; she was disappointed in not finding, as she had hoped, an ally in Therese. "Ah, he may keep that, as he likes," said she to her mother-in-law, "if it is good enough for him, it is all right for me."

On this day a perfect sea of blossoms smiled upon the earth. In the afternoon Therese gave her last coffee before her marriage. Julia had declined, she was busy packing; at this particular moment, she was seated up-stairs in her little attic-chamber, painting. The last stroke of the brush had yet to be put on a large majolica plaque which she was making for a wedding present.

Nothing about her betrayed that she had spent here the few bright hours of her life; she had swept away the most trifling signs. When she now packed colors and palette with the other materials in the box, no trace of her remained—could she only have eradicated those traces which had been impressed upon her on just as sunny a May day—on the preceding year.

She laid aside her brush and examined her work. Upon the yellowish background of the plaque was painted a gnarled branch with fading leaves, it lay there as if it could be carried away, as if it were real; below was—simply sketched in water, a broad boundless expanse, behind which the sun was sinking and over which a flock of birds were fleeing from the win-

ter. That was all, and yet in this little lay the yearning of a heart seeking sunshine and love as the feathered tribe seek a warmer land.

It had occurred unconsciously, she had sought to think of nothing but that she should paint no subject which could betray her grief, her love, and now the tiny sketch spoke all too plainly.

She rose, and carrying her work carefully, left the room; she knew a place for it in the young couple's dining-room and she intended to hang it up there as a last, silent greeting. The elegant apartment would now be entirely deserted, she felt sure of that, for it was time for the noon siesta. She had secretly extricated the key to the hall door from the key-basket of Aunt Minna who for the moment was still guardian of all this grandeur, and so she entered the rooms, which were shortly to harbor young, golden, human bliss.

She did not pause to examine minutely the sumptuousness of the chambers, but went at once to the dining-room there to find a place for her gift. It was the same room in which once little Frieder Adami had lived; it seemed to have been made for a cozy dining-room with its raftered ceiling, its wainscoted walls and deep window niches, as unrecognizable indeed as the old hall below. The wainscoting was richly carved, the unwainscoted part of the walls were covered with a costly tapestry, and the gigantic old stove had had to give place to an antique fire-place, before whose leaping flames it would be so cozy to sit in winter. In the center of the room, where once had stood the boy's work table, was the massive, heavy, oak table surrounded by high-backed chairs covered with leather. Upon the shelving of the wainscoting, upon the man-

tel-piece, over which was an immense mirror, stood all sorts of costly ornaments. Indeed this room looked so elegant that a simple dinner would blush, so to speak, to be served and eaten here.

Julia took from the pocket of her apron a bronze nail and a hammer and fastened the present over the buffet whose majolica surface accorded well with the plate; now a bronzed palm-leaf behind it and the simple decoration was complete. She stepped back to the nearest window in order to see the effect from this point; while her eyes were fixed upon the plate, they became suddenly vacant, staring. As if exhausted she sank upon one of the chest-like seats in the deep window-niches. It was so strangely quiet up there, even the pendulum of the costly clock swung in a soft, ghostly manner. It suddenly seemed to the girl as if the shades of the future were wandering about.

Will happiness dwell here—will it—will it? ticked the clock. And Miss Good-for-nothing shook her head and clasped her hands—she could not believe it. Then she saw close to her in one of the small window-panes, which the decorator had magnanimously left here, because it belonged to the character of the room, a heart, artistically cut, and under it the letters F. A.—T. K.

Frieder must have done that! Infinite bitterness, anger, contempt unparalleled rose in the girl's soul —could she only once hold a mirror before the face of the faithless one, a mirror which would expose her hypocritical face!

The girl mechanically passed her slender fingers over the tiny heart, as if they could blot it off the glass —in vain, it was too deeply engraved.

"Good Heaven," suddenly cried a clear voice beside

her, it is enough to scare one to death—how came you here?"

Julia rose quickly.

"Pardon," said she with an effort, "I had something to do here."

"What have you painted on the window?" asked Therese, bending her fair head; suddenly she started back, and her eyes from the pale face looked angrily up into Julia's.

Since Therese knew that the secret of her engagement to Frieder was guarded by Julia, since she knew that the girl would leave the house, she had been less anxious. Julia had herself looked upon the "folly" as a bagatelle; of Frieder's presence and of the circumstances connected with it she could suspect nothing—what did these threatening, reproachful eyes mean now?

"It was Frieder's room," said Julia hoarsely.

Therese made no reply.

"And that heart he probably carved there, when you pledged your faith; it will soon be a year."

"What are you talking about it to-day for?" asked Therese angrily. "Do you intend to bring up the affair as a nuptials'-eve jest? I have seen for a long time that you had something against me."

"I—shall not be here on your nuptials' eve, you know, and I never looked upon the sad affair as a jest," replied Miss Good-for-nothing calmly. "On the contrary, I wish you as much happiness as there is in the world, for *your* happiness is to be henceforth the happiness of a brave man and *your* peace his. And were I to find that you were really happy together, I believe, then—then I could forgive you a great deal."

The pretty girl's color returned to her cheeks. No,

this Miss Good-for-nothing would never repeat the stupid story of their engagement, out of consideration for *him*. This thing with the beggarly pride was, as Frau Roettger had betrayed, over head and ears in love with the doctor! And Therese smiled like the May day without.

"Let his happiness if you please, be *my* care, if I do interpret what they call happiness in another sense from what you do. Believe me, he will not fall short, we will tolerate each other, without your blessing too! When are you going away?"

"To-morrow!" was the curt response.

"Well, then probably we shall not meet again. Farewell! I wish you happiness in your future life, as sincerely as you wish it to me."

"Farewell, Therese; I hope that in years to come we shall meet again as friends."

"Well," said Therese somewhat ironically, "I really do not know what could make me your enemy."

Julia was silent. "I believe I could hate furiously," said she then softly, and her eyes again wandered toward the window-pane.

Then she was pushed aside, and the next moment the remnants of the broken pane fell upon the flagging of the court. "Now?" asked Therese's trembling voice, "Are you satisfied?"

Julia shrugged her shoulders somewhat. "What does it matter about the innocent glass? Ah, if one could obliterate the other things from the world so easily?" She turned and passed through the door.

"Were she but gone!" murmured Therese gloomily, looking after the departing form with angry eyes. Then a roguish smile flitted across her pretty face, the doctor stood upon the threshold.

"Broken glass? To-day?" cried he gayly.

She laughed. "I clumsily broke a pane. But does it not bring luck?"

"Did you hurt yourself?" he asked tenderly, drawing her to him.

She smiled up at him. "No, no! Is it not cozy here, is it not delightful?"

He nodded, but did not look around, he looked only in her beloved face. "I can still scarcely realize that you want to be mine," he whispered. "But come —this is the Paradise as yet forbidden me; come, that we do not provoke the gods."

CHAPTER XVII.

DESTINY MAKES STRANGE SPORT.

The May night crept on apace. For the last time Miss Good-for-nothing looked out into the blooming garden, in which she had played her modest childish games; to-morrow she would be at her duties perhaps she would have to stand by a death-bed. She did not fear the future; she wanted only work, a great deal of work, no idleness, which awakens memories and does not permit the wounds of the soul to heal.

She would have preferred not to have slept at all, but would have liked early in the morning to take the first ship and to go away without bidding anyone good-bye. How she dreaded this parting, which was synonymous with the loss of youth and happiness!

Quite softly she closed the window, that her aunt in the adjoining room might not be disturbed, the strange old lady, who had never had a kind word, a tender caress for her and to whom, nevertheless, she owed gratitude, for she had taken the defenseless child under her roof, had fed, clothed and sent her to school.

Was she not calling? Miss Good-for-nothing listened in affright. No, that was no call, it was a low moan. The next moment the young girl stood at her aunt's bedside, and the hastily-lighted candle showed her the distorted face of the unconscious woman.

She flew through the hall, passed through the wait-

ing and sitting-room and with her tiny hand knocked at the doctor's door. "Fritz, Fritz, aunt is dying!"

Then she awoke Frau Roettger and the next moment was again with the sufferer, supporting the sick woman who breathed and talked with difficulty, in her young, strong arms.

"A severe stroke of paralysis, Good-for-nothing," said the doctor sadly, after having examined the invalid and having helped her as much as he could. They stood together in the dark sitting-room in front of the sick room, and the cool May breeze was wafted past them. Frau Roettger had remained at her sister's bedside.

"You can make up your mind in all possibility to a long, trying time of sick-nursing, poor little Good-for-nothing," continued the doctor.

She started, she longed to cry out: "It is impossible, I *dare* not remain here!" but hastily she again lowered her head; yes, to be sure—she was the nearest to her—she—who else should nurse the solitary, embittered woman? And yet—Be merciful! Ah, be merciful!" she murmured.

He did not understand. "Perhaps she—perhaps you will soon be released, perhaps a second stroke will put an end to her miserable life, but perhaps too she will live on, a helpless, crippled woman, who can not do without you."

"I know! I know!" she cried, "Please do not say any more, I will remain."

He pressed her hand and returned to the sufferer.

Then Frau Roettger came out, weeping and lamenting. "That was just lacking—possibly she will die on the nuptials' eve, and if she lives, she will be so ill that for decency's sake Fritz will have to give up

his wedding-tour! No, that is just our luck. Telegraph to Cologne at once, you have enough to do here, with my limbs I can no longer lift and attend to a sick person. Ah God, and such an affliction had to come just now!"

Julia did not heed the agitated woman's lamentations; she went about her duties, and when morning dawned, she thought she saw in her aunt's fixed eyes awakening intelligence, and she answered her anxious, indistinct stammering with these words uttered in a loud voice, and accompanied by a gentle caress upon her cheek: "Be calm, auntie, I will stay with you—do you know me? Julia! Be calm!"

As she spoke a shimmer of relief flitted over the distorted features. The next day no change had taken place in Aunt Rieckhen's condition, but on the nuptials' eve she was already able to move her paralyzed arm a little.

Therese on this day would not allow herself to be saddened, and although at first Fritz would not listen to anything about music and a ball, she coaxed his consent by her sweet entreaties. "Eh, Fritz, let us dance together once more as merry spring lambkins, afterward dancing and playing will be over, father says. And from to-morrow I belong to you, Fritz, but to-day—to-day—"

He again visited his aunt's apartments before he went to his betrothed's house on the night preceding the wedding-day. Without, the sun was setting behind a mountain of clouds, and in the dim twilight Julia sat silently in the old-fashioned arm-chair at the window. Her head was resting against the cushions, her eyes were closed and she did not see the man until he stood directly before her. Her startled glance

took in his festal dress—he wore a frock coat and held a silk hat in his hand—and her lips were firmly compressed.

"I only wanted to ask you, Julia," said he "to close the windows in the sickroom, that the music may not disturb—I should have preferred a quiet celebration, but I do not want to spoil Therese's enjoyment of her last girlhood's days; she has, however, willingly given up the wedding-trip."

"And why will you not travel?" she asked. "Everything is doing nicely. I am here, and Uncle Doctor would have come if there had been a change for the worse."

He looked at her keenly; she had the old, sorrowful expression about her mouth.

She blushed a deep crimson. "Ah, pardon," she stammered, "I am only sorry you have given up your trip for aunt's sake. Moreover—what is it to me!"

She turned away, ashamed and vexed with herself—he must have divined, how difficult it was to see his new-born happiness in the house. "Go comfortably," she then added, "I will attend to everything here." And when he was gone, she closed the windows of the sick-room, but those of the anteroom she opened wide, and there with a strange agony she sat the whole night through and listened to the dance strains, which could be heard so plainly, to the laughter and cheers and she was still sitting there when mother and son returned home at dawn, "Steeling herself" she called it with a bitter smile.

Nor the next day did she leave the sick-chamber, when the newly-wedded pair stepped respectfully to the bedside of Aunt Riekchen, who had regained consciousness. She stood at the foot of the bed and

gazed with wide-open eyes at the bride who was almost peerless enveloped in white satin and lace, so charming in her pallor and the golden hair, which shimmered beneath the white fragrance of the veil. The beautiful woman bent over the invalid and kissed her nerveless hand. Then the newly-wedded pair prepared to go. The doctor did not look up. He did not seem to have noticed the pale girl standing proudly erect at the foot of the bed. Silently he laid Therese's hand upon his arm, nor did she turn her head.

Then Miss Good for-nothing stepped in their way. "Accept my congratulations," said she imploringly, extending her hand first to him and then to his young wife. With hesitation Therese touched the proffered hand, then the lace trimmed long train rustled over the threshold of the sick-room. And the house became quiet, unnaturally quiet, for the celebration in honor of the marriage was held at the "Goldenen Traube," and even the servants were there, to help or to look on.

Julia sat by her aunt's bed. Slowly, slowly night fell; the full moon arose behind the high trees. The invalid was asleep and still no one came home.

Julia rose; she passed through the hall to see if the front door was locked. They were to return through the garden; the door leading thither was wide open; a strip of moonlight fell upon the marble flagging and plainly lighted up the flowers which had that morning been strewn there. She passed through the door and inhaled the perfumed air—which was as sultry as if a storm were brewing; on the other side of the Rhine the lightening played vividly, but the nightingales sang loudly in the gardens.

Then the small iron gate below opened and shut,

and Julia saw something light, white, ascend the stairs, as if rising from the water, as dainty as a floating elfinveil—the young couple were going home.

Julia turned, fled across the hall into the sick-room and seated herself again by the sleeping woman's bedside. How the hours passed she did not know—shivering with cold, her aching head upon the bed at the feet of the old lady; in this position she found herself the next morning.

What leaden heaviness in every limb and what an oppressive sensation in her breast—what had happened?

She rose and put her hands to her throbbing temples when her eyes fell upon a tiny spring of myrtle, which lay in front of the bed; it must have become loosened from the bridal wreath, when Therese kneeled there.

Ah yes, they were man and wife!

Miss Good-for-nothing went to her room, cooled her face with fresh water and opened the window! A dismal, rainy day, the air wonderfully soft and sweet. The spring wealth of blossoms gone!

CHAPTER XVIII.

A CONJUGAL TETE-A-TETE.

Two years had passed.

Frau Riekchen Trautmann proved to have a strong constitution; she talked again, was fully conscious, but of course, she was paralyzed. Julia had to dress her and tend her like a little child.

"She does everything so conscientiously," said the old lady to her nephew, "but as silently and fixedly, as I fancy the slave of an Oriental prince would be—not a trace of friendliness, not a trace of that which is true balm for such a poor Lazarus, as I am—of love—"

It was on a warm day in the beginning of August when she complained thus.

The young doctor, who had just returned from his visits, looked at her in surprise, as if he had first to collect his wandering thoughts. "You desire to reap love, but you have sown no love in this heart," said he calmly. Over the sunken face before him flitted a bright flush. "Well, and you have news of Frieder?" said he, "I heard of it from my mother who informed Therese. Is he well?"

"Thank God, yes! Will you not take the letter up with you? It is very interesting; perhaps Therese too would like to read it. But now go—she surely is awaiting you for breakfast. Have you seen your boy to-day?"

"Yes!" said he, and his face beamed. "Frau Doris is walking in the garden with him." He took the letter which lay upon the table, rather from courtesy than curiosity, and withdrew. When he had hastily changed his clothes, he entered his wife's boudoir; she was not there—she must surely be in her dressing-room. Right! Therese had obtained a new costume from her papa, which was as if for a traveling dress, and was trying it on. With a smile she turned her rosy face toward him.

"Well, how are your two dangerously-ill patients?" she cried. "Will they allow us to go?"

"I cannot give you a decisive answer to-day, darling," he answered, casting a glance of admiration at her in her becoming attire. "A few days make no difference, do they?"

"Oh, if you please! Anyone would know that you have never traveled," she replied quickly. "*Does* it make any difference? It is now the height of the season at Ostende—a few weeks later and our three weeks' stay will extend into September, and, you know, in September all those go there who wish to live economically, but not one single person of distinction, not one single lady of the upper class; one sees no more toilettes, the meals are poor, in short, it is horrible!"

"Poor darling!" he comforted smiling, "Indeed, I fear, these two invalids will seriously interfere with our plans."

"You can say that with such composure?" she asked, tying two heavy grey faille ribbons on the silk traveling cloak, which he helped her to put on.

"What shall I do? I can surely not tear out my hair on that account?"

"There is some truth in the fact that you doctors are the slaves of mankind," said she very slowly—"and that one—"

"If one marries a doctor, one becomes a sort of slave," he completed. "Well, at any rate you are quite a charming little slave, and I am indescribably sorry that possibly this beautiful costume will have to be satisfied with being displayed to the admiring world on a Rhine steamer." He sighed comically. "Yes, truly, little wife, those two are in a critical condition; God knows, when we can take our trip."

She did not say a word; she tied and untied her ribbons, as she did so humming softly to herself. At length the knot seemed satisfactory; with her slender fingers she picked off a tendril, slowly undid the ribbons, took off the cloak, changed her new dress for a dainty house-robe, singing as she did so and evading the kiss which he tried to press upon her pretty, white arm. When she had finished, she said: "Now we will breakfast!"

"You always think of the right thing!" he cried.

As they sat facing each other in the cool dining-room, she remarked: "You will not suffer, if I go alone with papa . . just taste this lamb cutlet and these fried potatoes, Susanne prepared them herself."

He laid down his knife and fork and looked in perplexity at his bewitching *vis-â-vis*.

"You can come when you have time, later on," she added, putting a golden-brown slice of potato between her lips.

"Are you in earnest?"

"Yes, of course! You may be a slave as much as you like, *I* am obliged—what do I care for strangers with typhus fever?"

"It will be very lonesome here for the boy and me," said he finally.

"But for heaven's sake, Fritz, do you think I will leave the child *here?* No, the boy too will go with his nurse Doris to Ostende."

"No, dearest, the boy will remain in the country with his nurse Doris, and will continue to take the milk given by the black and brown cow, who is being especially fed for him at the 'Gelben Hofe.'"

Frau Therese now laid down her knife and fork and stared at her husband, surprised and curious at the unusual opposition. "There is fine milk to be obtained at Ostende," said she dryly; "moroever, we will take the new sterilizer with us, by means of which any milk can be rendered harmless. All mothers take their children with them—and I *shall* not go away without the child!"

"Still you will have to make up your mind to do so, if you do not want to remain here, for under no conditions will I permit you to expose the child to the dangers with which an entirely different mode of life is impregnated for so young a babe."

"But dearest, you act as if the boy belonged to you alone," she answered with the greatest composure. "Only think, mothers have the first claim upon their children! What would become of him without me?"

He laughed involuntarily. "You act as if you were in the habit of never losing sight of the little fellow for a minute, and yet Doris takes the entire charge of him. Besides I am here to care for him and I need not assure you, that during your absence I will watch over him doubly."

"And if you had gone too?"

"There are three grown women in the house," he

returned, still midway between being amused and vexed. "Firstly there is the grandmother," he continued, "who would wear out her soles to see the little fellow as often as possible—"

"Your mother may see him as often as she likes, but I do not want her to interfere with his training or with Doris' care of him, as she is so fond of doing, and as she of course will do when I am gone. She has not yet forgiven me for not using the swaddling clothes three yards long which belonged to you, and she cannot understand why I do not put a wadded cap on the poor child's head on the finest summer days as soon as he is taken into the garden."

"Ah, Therese, I have explained all that to her. She, however, loves the boy tenderly and—"

"Well, and as second protectress there is Aunt Riekchen, who needs a nurse herself?"

"Yes, we will leave Aunt Riekchen out of the question, but do not forget Julia!"

Now Frau Therese's eyes glowed. "I must request you emphatically, to consider Julia in this matter as not existing at all!" she cried. "I have reason to believe that she can not bear me; nor does she like my child—"

"Therese, you are unjust!"

"No," replied the agitated woman, "I am not! If you did not feel for her the absurd, sentimental compassion which in their innermost souls men always feel for those by whom they think they are loved, you would long since have noticed with what a feeling of dislike this Miss Good-for-nothing regards me and the child. She actually looks down upon me."

"Because you are a head shorter than she is," said he with composure.

"I am not joking!" she exclaimed. "When I make a remark, Fraulein Julia's lips curl contemptuously; if I play with the child, I see her dark eyes fixed so strangely upon me—I cannot tell you how—almost hungrily; she grudges me the boy. And when we are all three together, she turns and goes into her room, as if the sight of us were poison to her. She has an odd, envious disposition!"

"Who told you she once loved me?" he asked calmly, and his eyes looked past her to the majolica plaque, which Julia had painted for their wedding-present. "My own, little bit of sense, Doctor, and your mother."

"Is that so?"

"And that you are still deeply touched by the fact, my own sense and my own eyes tell me."

"Is that so?"

He suddenly cleared his throat, poured out a glass of wine and said in a loud voice: "Well, it is settled, the boy remains here under my and Frau Doris' care."

She looked at him keenly. But as she saw nothing but a determined expression which would scarcely admit of any opposition, she began to peel a peach and remarked:

"I suppose I must be the more sensible of the two and yield."

"In that you do well, little woman!"

"Are you not pleased that I am not at all jealous of —this Julia?" she asked, handing him half of the fruit with a smile.

"I do not see anything to be pleased about, it is only as it should be," he answered. "I should at the most be pleased that she is not jealous. You know, that beside you, no other image can find a place in my heart, of course, excepting our boy."

She had arisen and advanced to press a kiss upon his brow. "You are, nevertheless, a kind, silly, old husband," said she.

He held her fast and drew her upon his knee. "I hope your heart is fashioned like mine," he jested, "that it has likewise only one small chamber in which my boy and I can just find room."

She threw back her fair head. "And if it were not so?" she whispered, her blue eyes sparkling with coquetry.

"Therese, you should not jest about that!"

"No, no, come!" said she, "what would you do, tell me, were you to find, that another man besides you—"

He did not reply, for a second he seemed to fancy himself in that position, and the young wife was startled, so ghastly were his features, so fixed his eyes.

"For God's sake!" cried she. "It was only a jest, Fritz!" And she shook him by the shoulder, herself pale.

"What would I do?" he said in a moody voice. "I do not know, the time would inspire me, but—I can understand a murder from jealousy."

She rose; she felt chilly.

He now sought to soothe her. "You silly, little woman, that comes from your ridiculous questions. Why talk of things which lie outside the range of the possible? Come, take a swallow of wine and go to papa, tell him I entrust to him for a holiday my most precious possession. And go soon, that you may speedily return!"

He kissed her once more and went down stairs.

CHAPTER XIX.

BAD NEWS.

Julia sat beside Aunt Riekchen's rolling-chair under the nut-tree in the garden. The old lady gazed dreamily before her, while Julia read the paper aloud. Frau Roettger was cutting up beans, without removing her eyes from the perambulator, which Frau Doris was pushing up and down in the shady vine-arbor by the wall. The noise of the old woman who addressed the little fellow in all manner of unintelligible, tender expressions, could be heard where they were sitting.

Frau Roettger's face expressed displeasure and mistrust; that of the old nurse resembled an angry lioness, from whom they wish to take her young. Frau Therese had yesterday started on her journey, and already that very morning the grandmother and Doris had disagreed at the bedside of the slumbering, little prodigy, and the doctor had scarcely been able to soothe their excited souls.

Julia's deep, melodious voice was suddenly interrupted by Frau Minna's shrill tones: "Take him this minute out of the hot sun? Do you want the little fellow to get a sun-stroke?"

The nurse pretended not to hear, and talked calmly on with her charge: "Eh, my heart, eh, do you like the sun? The good, beautiful sun!"

"The woman must leave the house, or I will have an apoplectic seizure!" stammered the old lady.

Julia let the paper fall, during the *intermezzo*, and then read the close of a law-matter.

"See if there is anything about Africa!" said Aunt Riekchen.

'I have looked, aunt, but I found nothing," the young girl replied.

"Not among the telegraphic news?"

Julia looked through the dispatches—Paris—London—Madrid. "Zanzibar," she murmured. Suddenly she held the large sheet of paper before her face, while the sheet trembled in her hand.

"Why do you tremble?" asked the old lady.

Slowly the sheet sank; the girl's pale but composed features were again visible. "Did I tremble?" she asked. "There is nothing about Africa."

At that moment Frau Roettger rushed away to tell the hated nurse her opinion to her face.

Aunt Riekchen looked sharply at her adopted daughter.

"Shall I read on?" asked Julia—there was a peculiar, changed accent in her voice.

"Is there really nothing new from Africa?"

Julia shook her head and looked toward the doctor, who was returning from his professional calls in the glowing August sun, in a light, gray summer suit, a straw hat in his hand, wiping his forhead with his handkerchief. She drew back behind the old lady's chair, looked at him who was advancing and laid her finger upon her lips.

The doctor approached calmly, seated himself and began to talk of indifferent things. Julia walked to meet Frau Roettger who was returning with head proudly erect in the consciousness of her superiority as victor and as grandmother.

"I should like to tell you something, aunt; please, come with me a moment," said Julia. "I have just read in the newspaper, that Frieder has been wounded in a fight with the natives; Aunt Riekchen must not find it out!"

The old lady clasped her hands. "Severely wounded of course," she exclaimed. 'And probably the truth of it is, that he is already dead. Great God!"

Julia was silent.

"And you," continued Frau Roettger, "you stand there and do not say a word? What kind of a girl are you! It is your own brother who is hurt. I never could bear the brother, but I feel sorry to have him punished thus, to have to die away from home so miserably among savages, without a soul belonging to him."

Julia did not reply to the reproach. "Please, do not make aunt uneasy," she replied. "You had better not join her now, she is so observant and so suspicious, she would see at once that something had happened."

"I am as clever as that too," replied the old lady, "I do not care to see the poor thing either. Go, fetch the paper and bring it to me in the kitchen, I want to read it."

"Yes, yes," said she to herself as she walked on, "either he will die or he will come back an invalid and live on us. God in heaven forgive me—I wish he had been killed outright!"

After dinner, when the old lady unsuspectingly slept in her cool apartment, Julia sat in her room at the window, her hands motionless in her lap, and the newspaper which contained the short, important news, before her. Not one feature of her face was changed, only the small mouth was still more firmly compressed.

It had come. Julia long since realized that no lamentation and struggle could avert the blow of fate, and a sort of rigidity lay over her own feelings; she only felt in the souls of others.

She pondered upon the fact that the news of the wounding or perhaps the death of the old lady's pet would prove like a dagger blow to which she would succumb; she thought perhaps Frieder had sought death, because he could not forget Therese, and that she would be entirely alone, if she no longer had a brother. For how much of a stranger was she in the midst of these people in whose society she had spent her life! Even to the invalid she was bound only by duty, by pity; she returned by the care which she bestowed upon the aging woman, the care which the latter had devoted to her neglected youth. But she had never been able to feel any deeper sensation for the old lady.

And Fritz?

In his presence she had with an effort quieted her heart's pulsations; to him she was indifferent and cold, and only a faint sense of anger arose within her when he seemed inclined to pity her. This too she concealed. Outwardly there was simply a contemptuous quiver about her mouth, when Fritz, especially when first married, sought to hide his affection, his happiness in her presence; when on her joining them he dropped his young wife's hand which he had just pressed to his lips, or when with an effort he sought to remove his eyes from her glowing face.

She smiled with the same severe quiver about the corners of her mouth, and she smiled likewise when he tried to hide from her his anxiety with regard to his beloved wife, before the birth of their son. But

his pale face upon which the beads of perspiration stood during those hours which preceded that birth, was to her like a revelation. How the woman must be loved! And the tears on his lashes, the tears with which he announced the important event to the old lady, the trembling joy, the grateful jubilee re-awakened within her the one thought: how the woman must be loved!

"Show me your child, Fritz!" she had said and she ascended with him to the sumptuous apartments, and he brought forth the bundle with the new-born and let her look at the tiny creature. Over the child's head their eyes met.

Miss Good-for-nothing did not know that she gazed at the man with an expression which made his glad heart ache. At this moment the quiet, proud maiden seemed to him like a shivering, starving beggar-child, who with feverish longing looks into a lighted room at Christmas time and in the magnificence she sees there, forgets how poor she is. In her deep dark eyes was an expression of blissful delight at the sight of the tiny, slumbering creature. "Ah, how sweet!" she murmured, extending her arms. Then Therese in a faint voice called from the adjoining room, and Julia's arms fell, her long lashes sank lower over her eyes.

The child was taken from him; he accompanied Julia to the door, her heart filled with bliss and compassion, and then he said to the girl with a lack of tact as he stroked her cheek: "Will you not be happy too, Good-for-nothing!"

The icy expression about her mouth, the hasty rap upon his hand and the scornful glance, caused him to cease speaking suddenly. Since then she had neither asked for the child, nor even looked at it when it was carried past her.

She did not love the child? So at least thought those in the house.

"He who does not like children, has no heart!" said Frau Roettger to her, adding in surprise: "And the silly little boy laughs at you notwithstanding and cries: 'Ula!' Such innocence!"

They did not suspect that the child and "Ula" had concluded a secret friendship, that the old dragon of a nurse entrusted the child without any objection to the quiet, lonely girl. These two had a firmly-rooted alliance; especially when the young mistress and Frau Roettger were invited to tea or coffee, the doctor was making professional calls and Aunt Riekchen had fallen asleep. Then Julia flew upstairs, kneeled beside the bed, played with the boy and patiently allowed the clumsy, fat little hands to pull her hair. She taught him his first, little tricks, she taught him to say "Papa." Then she pressed the tiny form to her with passionate tenderness.

"Oh," she murmured, "I could die for you!"

"Leave the boy to me altogether!" scolded the old woman who usually sat at the window and knit stockings for the child, "and do you live; he needs a kind aunt with *such* a mother."

Frau Doris could not conceal her aversion for the mother and grandmother.

Julia never replied to such remarks, and at the slightest sound she disappeared from the cozy nursery.

Once she could not escape and with a throbbing heart she took refuge behind the curtain, which served Frau Doris in the place of a wardrobe; and there with closed eyes and compressed lips she was forced to listen to all the tenderness which the father lavished upon his darling. How soft his voice sounded! Julia

was familiar with that accent, he had addressed her thus not long since! She felt as if she could not listen to it, as if she must cry out with pain, if he did not cease. God be praised, he was called away, and she could escape.

Suddenly Julia started from her reverie—the clock in the adjoining room had struck the hour at which she was in the habit of paying her visit to Frau Doris. Hastily she rose and ascended to the nursery, but nurse and charge were asleep, the old woman in her chair and the child in his cradle. Julia kneeled beside the little bed and gazed her fill. Then she rose and with an anxious air sought to reach the door, but this time she did not succeed in making good her escape. The doctor stood before her and looked at her with astonished eyes.

"You here?" he asked. And he thought of his wife's remark that Julia hated the child.

"Excuse me!" she said defiantly, seeking to pass him.

"Wait a moment!" said he calmly, "I was looking for you—a dispatch has arrived from Frieder. At his request he has been put on board of one of our men-of-war which is soon to return to Germany. That is the laconic contents of the telegram which I received through the medium of the Berlin foreign office. Nothing is mentioned as to his condition, but as they have ventured to move him, there must be hope of his recovery. So he is coming!"

A flood of thoughts shot through Julia's head.

"Here?" she stammered.

"Where else? His home is with us!"

"But he must not come!" said she anxiously.

"How?" asked the doctor, rising from his stooping

posture. He had been gazing upon the sleeping child.

"Nothing!" she replied, leaving the room.

Julia that night could not sleep, she saw constantly two youthful forms, sitting opposite each other and gazing affectionately upon each other—Frieder and Therese. Could they, who had looked thus ever forget?

She again rose with an aching head. "He must not come, he must not!" she said.

Then the old defiant feeling returned. "What does it concern me!"

CHAPTER XX.

HOW THE RETURNED SOLDIER IS RECEIVED.

"Now, to be short and sweet, dear sister-in-law, the wounded traveler must live with *me*," said Herr Krautner, who some time since had returned home from Ostende with his daughter, and who as he spoke struck the floor emphatically with his stick. "There is simply no room in this house, and in mine there are twelve unoccupied rooms. Do not fear, he shall lack nothing at my house and you can see your foster-son as often as you wish; the door in the garden-wall which I had made for my children, is open too to him. So it is settled! First Lieutenant Adami is to take up his quarters with me!"

Aunt Riekchen attempted a few objections; it could be managed very well there—he came as a son to his mother, said she sorrowfully. And Julia could go up into the attic-chamber"—I will have a small stove set up for her—"

"Perhaps you might have the rabbit-hutch fixed up for her," cried the old gentleman angrily. "Not here, the lieutenant will come to me—eh, little girl," he turned to Julia, "is that not the best?"

"Yes!" said Julia, raising her eyes from her embroidery. "Yes! At any rate I will go into the cold attic-room under no circumstances."

Aunt Riekchen looked up in surprise. Never had the girl rebelled against any arrangement made for

her. This rudeness unstrung the old lady's nerves. "Well, formerly we could not get you out of this room," said she, "and now you do not want to occupy it?"

"No, aunt!"

"Why not?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "Because it is cold up there," she replied curtly.

"Then, it is settled, the lieutenant will stay with me," again began the old gentleman who made a bow and withdrew.

Those left behind did not speak. Fraulein Riekchen wept softly; Julia did not notice it. She only looked up occasionally from her work at the December flurry of snow.

"You will meet him at the station," finally began Aunt Riekchen, "and tell him considerately, that there is no room for him in his foster-mother's house?"

"Yes!"

"You have acquired such a harsh tone, Julia, one is almost afraid to ask anything of you," complained the old lady.

"Oh," replied the girl, "was I ever any different?"

"Everyone in the house complains," continued Aunt Riekchen. "It was very unaccommodating of you not to help a little at the dance up-stairs!"

"I do not understand such things—and then . . Therese cannot bear me around her."

At this moment there was a knock, and Therese entered. She was Santa Claus, she said laughing, and had brought something with her. And amid all sorts of merry jests she unwrapped two small packages and handed each of the ladies one.

Never had it happened that Therese had paid Julia

any attention. The latter looked in astonishment at the elegant woman in the costly velvet cloak, upon whose brown folds the snowflakes still lay.

"For me?" she asked, and the usual tremor appeared in the corners of her mouth.

"Yes, certainly!" was the reply; then Therese hurried out.

"Now, you again have proof of the injustice of your remark that Thereschen cannot bear you," said Fraulein Riekchen.

"In what way?" Julia did not even take the trouble to open the package. She knit on, while the sick woman with difficulty with her stiff fingers unwrapped the paper and rejoiced over the elegant little box which fell out and in which was probably some dainty. Julia's present lay there just the same in the evening when she had gone to meet her brother at the station.

"She grows daily more intolerable," said Frau Roettger, as she heard the story of the unheeded gift. "If you did not need her so badly, Riekchen, you could have let her go long since—but that is just it!"

"That she has become so unkind is my greatest trial," assented Fraulein Riekchen, and her old heart vibrated with delight at the thought of being able to press her beloved boy to her bosom.

"A mother could not await her own child more impatiently," murmured Frau Minna, returning to her room, in order not to witness the "comedy" of the meeting.

Half an hour later Aunt Riekchen sat between her two foster-children at supper. The old lady could eat nothing, she gazed constantly at the handsome, stately man whose bronzed face showed scarcely a trace of suffering, although he still wore his arm in a sling.

He kindly and patiently answered all the confused questions of the old lady, he related for the fourth time in an hour the story of his wounding, he praised the carp and the Rhine wine and told his sister she had grown handsome tall, and veritably Roman. He thought it "all right" to stay over there with the "old man, "after he considered that Fritz lived up-stairs with his young wife, and he listened with polite attention to the enthusiastic description of the "boy," which, his aunt in her delight, indulged in.

"Indeed, Frieder," she continued, "they are up-stairs; seldom are a couple as well-mated as they, and to-day, although they have been married three years, they look at each other as affectionately as they did on the betrothal day."

He helped himself again to fish. "I am very glad to hear it," said he dryly. Julia had not the courage to look at him.

"To-morrow you must call on them and Aunt Minna too?" continued Aunt Riekchen, "you will then see for yourself how the youth blooms and old age fades. Yes, my boy, had you come much later, you would not have found me here." The tears ran down the old lady's cheeks, nor could she wipe them away with her poor, helpless hands.

"You must go to bed," said Julia at length softly.

"Ah, not so soon, I cannot sleep yet," implored her aunt. "Fetch some apples and nuts, Julia, it seems as if you were children again."

Obediently Julia brought forth what she required, and Frieder began to talk again. Suddenly he ceased, and a dark flush overspread his face. The piano was being played up-stairs.

Anxiously Julia watched his face; from above came

the tones of a melancholy melody, it was variations on the theme "A wanderer with his staff in his hand."

"That is one of Fritz's favorite pieces," said Julia aloud, gathering up the plates noisily. And the happy old lady softly repeated the words of the poem, as she stroked the man's hand:

"So sehr auch die Sonne sein Antlitz verbrannt,
Das Mutterang hat ihn doch gleich erkannt."

"You look different however, from when you went away, Frieder; you have grown handsome, almost as handsome as your father was."

He rose suddenly, for from above came the strains of the "Faust Waltz."

"Sleep well," said he, "we are all tired. I am not either so very bright; to-morrow I will tell you more. Help me with my coat, Julia, and then, good-night! I remember the way."

"I will go with you," she replied. And together they passed through the snowy garden-paths.

"So there is a gate here," he murmured. And as if he wished to shake off all memories forcibly, he said aloud: "The old lady has become quite frail. Ah, how-do-you-do, Herr Krautner! I am grateful to you for hospitably throwing open your house to me; how have you been?"

Julia, who at once turned back, heard the old gentleman say: "Welcome, Lieutenant! How are you? Have you as I recommended on parting from you, settled down? Yes? Well, I am glad. Now come in and make yourself at home!"

When she returned the music had ceased. In the hall she met the doctor, just leaving his study.

"Tell me, Good-for-nothing," he asked, "was I mistaken or did Therese really play?"

"Yes, she played."

"Strange!" he muttered. Then he turned again. "Did your brother arrive safely?"

"Yes"! she repeated curtly and disappeared.

The doctor found his wife pacing the floor in agitation.

"It is well that you have come," said she, "I feel so uneasy, the wind must be the cause."

"Oh, little Madame Wisdom!" he jested. "Not a breeze is stirring without; the snow-flakes are falling thick and fast, so that you can have sleighing at Christmas. Have you seen anything of the African?"

"I?—No—what have I to do with him?" she replied hastily.

"Well, do not be angry, there was no offense in my question, darling!"

"I did not mean to be angry."

"All right! But I am pleased that you are playing the piano once more, dear heart."

She made no reply.

CHAPTER XXI.

GHOSTS OF THE PAST.

The young officer had been home three weeks.

It could not be denied that he had brought "life into the house," as Doctor Roettger said good-naturedly to his wife.

The two playmates' aversion seemed to have entirely disappeared. Though they were not demonstrative at all, mutual respect had taken the place of reserve; each one respected in the other the energetic man, who attended conscientiously to his calling. The lieutenant's overbearing manner had given place to a charming modesty, and the abruptness of the other to a gentleness which seemed to owe its origin to his domestic happiness. There were now pleasant chats at the doctor's tea-table around which the whole family gathered and at which the traveler formed the central point of attraction; there were festal Sunday dinners at the Krautner villa, and even Frau Roettger indulged in a leg of veal.

The Christmas holiday passed with all its glory of light; in the young couple's dining-room elegant gifts had awaited the family, and the voice of the child, who stretched out his hands with delight toward the glittering tree, rang in the ears of all like sweet music.

A weight had been lifted from Julia's breast, she now breathed more freely; the wound which the beau-

tiful, fair woman had once made in her brother's heart, seemed to have completely healed over, and Therese—yes, Therese had eyes and ears for no one but her husband. Never could Julia discover that these two, Frieder and Therese, even exchanged a glance which exceeded the bounds of innocent acquaintance or relationship. They stood upon the footing of mutual esteem and conducted themselves as if the pretty blonde head had never lain upon his breast, as if he had never kissed the charming woman's rosy lips, as if her eyes had never shed the most scalding tears for his sake.

Julia rejoiced; but she was surprised at the fact as at something incomprehensible. Did not his heart ache one particle?

The gay Carnival was approaching. Therese was buried deep in the newest fashion journals, the lieutenant suggested the attire of a Swedish peasant, which he thought charming and as if created for her fair beauty. After dinner they were left alone in the dining room. Papa Krautner and the officer had dined with the young couple. Fritz had been called away, the old gentleman had gone to take his afternoon nap. The table was half-cleared, only the *compote* dishes, the wine-glasses and the fruit-dish were still upon the damask-cloth. Before them stood the half-emptied mocha cups; above them circled the light blue rings of smoke from the cigarette which the officer was smoking. The air was warm, permeated with the odor of tobacco, oranges and coffee. The fire in the grate had burned low and cast its glow upon the polished floor as far as the Smyrna rug under the massive table. The pale light of the January day only dimly lit up the cozy room. The flame beneath the gleaming little

kettle seemed intensely blue, and Tick Tack! Tick Tack! said the clock in its soft, discreet tone. The magazine rattled in the young wife's hands and the pencil which the lieutenant held, glided hastily over the paper. Both remained silent, they were entirely alone for the first time.

Therese crossed her arms and looked fixedly upon the designer.

"There," said he as unconcernedly as possible, but still he did not succeed in altogether hiding his inward agitation and the tremor in his voice—"now—just picture the colors, the gay embroidery, the lovely blue of the bodice, and you have an idea of it. I saw this costume on a Swedish ship; the captain had his young wife with him, a fair, pretty woman like—you, Therese."

She started and blushed deeply.

Another silence ensued.

Finally she rose, went silently to the grate, seized the poker and stirred the fire. He followed her with his eyes, and she must have felt his glance, for she turned.

"Shall we skate a little?" she asked hastily.

"If you wish!"

Therese stepped into the window-niche, to look at the sky and the thermometer. He rose and followed her.

So they stood close together in the embrasure, almost hidden by the gayly woven curtain. A greenish light came through the small, leaded panes—only one had a clearer color.

"How often have I stood here," said he in a low voice, "my Cornelius Napos in my hand, studying and looking over the book into the court, as a boy

regretting every moment lost up here. Then, later, I stood here too"—he extended his hand toward the new pane—

"Leave the memories!" said she violently—as if in a tone of command—

"Shall we set out?"

"Yes!" she replied; nevertheless she hesitated. Suddenly she turned her beautiful face full upon him, it was dyed crimson. "Tell me one thing," was wafted toward him like a breath, "that you have forgiven me!"

"No, I have not!"

"No?"

"No—never!"

They looked at each other, then she lowered her eyes, trembling and groping behind her with her hand, in order to support herself upon the window-sill.

"How could I forgive her who robbed me of my life's happiness?" he continued bitterly. The next moment the curtain fell behind his slender form. Therese heard his step go through the room, heard him open and close the doors! She remained there as if stunned.

After a while the maid entered.

"Madam?"

She rose with difficulty. "What do you want?"

"The lieutenant is awaiting madam to go skating."

She put her hand to her brow. "Tell him, I am sorry I cannot come, it has grown too late and—I have a headache. Or no, do not say I have a headache."

She then repaired to the nursery, but the child was below with his grandmother. So she descended the stairs and quietly seated herself in the arm-chair at the stove, watching the old lady playing with the child.

"What do you think about the lieutenant, Therese?" asked Frau Roettger suddenly.

"What about him?"

"He has been ordered to Berlin and is to tell the Emperor about the battle. Eh, boy, *he* can laugh!"

"How do you know that?" asked Therese in a strangely hurried manner.

"From Fritz. The letter came just when you sent word you did not care to go on the ice. Frieder leaves to-night."

Therese made no remark, she, however, blushed.

"The gentlemen at the 'Traube' tried to persuade him to give a lecture about his experiences and the custom in the Colonies," continued Frau Roettger. "I believe, he promised to do so next week. You will see the Andersheimers will fight for seats, for everything African is the rage now."

Miss Good-for-nothing, who was on her way to the Krautner villa to help Frieder unpack, met Frau Therese a few minutes later in the hall.

"Where are you going?" asked the young wife.

"To Frieder."

"Wait, I will go with you; that is, I want to see papa!"

Arrived at the villa Therese immediately sought her father's room, Julia her brother's.

The host's room was filled with a blue cloud of tobacco smoke. The old man sat in the arm-chair with his long pipe; opposite him with a cigar was his son-in-law. The officer was seated on the edge of the table, a cigarette between his slender fingers.

Father and husband greeted Therese pleasantly; Frieder rose silently from his careless position. "Did Julia come with you?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Therese, "she wants to pack your trunk."

"Kind of her!"

She stepped behind her father's chair; she would not sit down, she said, she only wished to see how he was, he had been so pale.

"Is that what you came for?" asked the old gentleman laughing. "I am as lively as a fish in water!" He rose and advanced to the only mirror in the room, above the chest of drawers. "I must see, nevertheless, occasionally it collars one, one knows not how!" he murmured.

"But, papa, do not jest!" exclaimed the doctor. "You are the picture of health."

"Yes, that is true indeed, Fritz," replied Herr Krautner sitting somewhat uncomfortably erect in his chair, "But you see, the day before yesterday I met Frau Norban, she sat in her carriage the personification of health—and to-day she is at the point of death."

"Frau Norban?" cried Therese. "You have told me nothing about it, Fritz!"

"I have just heard of it myself."

"What? Are you not the Norban's physician?"

He puffed at his cigar. "No longer, it seems," he replied quietly.

Suddenly the young matron colored. "You are no longer stylish?" said she sharply. "Since the New Year you have not been employed by the Brinkmanns or the Voights either!"

He laughed. "Since when have you taken such an interest in my practice, little wife?"

"I have always been interested in it, more than you think! At any rate I am not as indifferent as you

are, as to your being the first and most sought-after doctor in town!" she replied excitedly.

"Well! Well!" muttered the old gentleman who did not know whether she was jesting or in earnest.

The doctor still laughed; the lieutenant slowly lighted a fresh cigarette.

"Were I in your place I would try to get out of this nest," she continued; "it would be easy for you to obtain a professorship at Heidelberg or somewhere! But you are quite satisfied with the old routine here, and allow the people to tell you all sorts of incredible things."

"Frieder," said the doctor somewhat sharply, "ask His Majesty if he does not chance to need a physician in ordinary; my wife would be especially fitted for the spouse of such a person."

The old gentleman laughed and coughed loudly; Frieder rose. Without entering into the doctor's joke, he bowed politely and excused himself under the pretext of wanting to help his sister.

"Now tell me, for God's sake, child, what demon of pride has possessed you!" exclaimed the doctor, quickly restored to good humor. He took her hand and drew her resisting form toward him. "Do Frau Norban and the two other seceders furnish grounds enough for me to give up my quite lucrative position here?"

She threw back her head and stroked her brow; it seemed as if her senses were just returning. "I am sorry that you wish to spoil your life here," said she softly, "and too, I am vexed at the ingratitude of the people."

"Silly darling, leave that to me; I have a great deal of reason to be delighted with gratitude. But we

must go home, the time is coming for our frolic with 'Boy'; it is growing dark. Good-night, grandpapa!"

They went home through the garden and together entered the nursery. The nurse had lighted the lamp and spread the large piece of white felt upon the floor; the child who sat upon it in the short, white flannel dress, stretched its arms gleefully toward its father. Softly the old woman left the room, and the hour, which had always been the most delightful for parents and child, began. But strange to say, there was not the same enjoyment in it to-day.

"You are not entering into the spirit!" jested the doctor, throwing to his wife, who sat at one end of the rug, the ball, after which the child crept on all fours.

"Indeed I—I am so tired to-day," said she, rolling the ball toward the boy, who looked quite surprised; then she rose and seated herself in a chair.

"Have you a headache, dearest?"

"Yes, a little."

"Be quiet, noisy fellow, mamma has the headache," he whispered to the child and gazed with delight upon the open mouth and the inquiring blue eyes, with which the little one first listened to the whisper, in order afterward to scream aloud.

"Go to your room, Therese, it is quiet there; I will soon follow you."

She rose and went out. She did not know how she felt and she did not want to know. She would have liked to have done something, something mad, unreasonable—only something different, to do away with that which raged in her brain, which excited her to such a terrible degree! For weeks, wheresoever she went and stood, she saw the same—a handsome,

bronzed man's face with fair hair, whose clear eyes seemed never to look at her and which yet pierced the depths of her soul, detaining her in an insufferable bann—this same equable, calm, composed personality, which, without the tremor of an eyelash, could meet the greatest danger, but too could with a smile wound mortally.

And he had once belonged to her, to her alone!

She planted her clenched fists upon the window-sill. She saw him in the presence of his Imperial master with the same composure, she saw him at the table to which he was graciously bidden, perhaps by the side of some proud beauty while he described to the lady the African scenery in the glowing colors in which he had described it to her so often, so often! How absurd she still was! What was he to her! She could have had him, had she wanted him—she had not wanted him and had become the adored wife of another—of another. . .

"Well, little one, still without a light?" at this moment called out the voice of her husband.

"Still," said she wearily.

He seated himself upon the sofa and yawned audibly. "Darling," he besought, "do not be angry—but that matter to-day undid me."

She did not ask: "What matter?" and so did not learn that he had had to perform a difficult amputation.

"Come to me a little, Therese."

She rose slowly and advanced, but she did not nestle to him as usual. He drew her to him. "There, now I desire nothing else in the world."

She did not reply, she simply shrugged her shoulders imperceptibly that he did not feel it, although he

held her in his arms. They sat thus in silence, at length after some time she said half-aloud: "But it would be nice!"

"What?"

" If you would do something to—"

"Become something exceptional," he completed. "How absurd you are! Will not Frieder's laurels allow you to rest?"

Again she shrugged her shoulders, and from her lips almost inaudibly and with an effort came the words: "What does Frieder concern me!"

CHAPTER XXII.

HOW FREIDER WINS APPLAUSE FROM A FASHIONABLE AUDIENCE.

Frieder was really the "style." The newspapers published lengthy articles about him, articles which announced that he had been summoned to Berlin and what occurred at the audience. Then the mayor of the town gave out that Lieutenant Adami would deliver a lecture tor the benefit of the restoration of the Elizabeth church at Andersheim on his experiences in the German territory in East Africa.

The person sought after, amid all this, remained unchanged, he was as formal and as affable as ever; he smoked his cigarettes with as much composure, skated with Frau Therese and danced with her at the parties given in his honor. But he did not dance with her any oftener than he danced with others.

Therese grew paler and more irritable than ever, and the doctor was gravely anxious; he consulted with his mother about this strange alteration.

"Well, you are a nice doctor for the family," said the latter calmly; "I advise you to employ a house-physician! As if it were anything for a young wife to have whims! When I was newly-married I threw the boot-jack at your father's head."

He was obliged to laugh and was consoled for a few days, only to become more anxious.

Suddenly, however, all seemed to have vanished

which had rendered Therese sad, and this change took place on the day on which Frieder Adami delivered his lecture at the Casino.

Towards evening Therese entered Aunt Riekchen's room rather put-out, for she was to go to the lecture with Julia, Frau Roettger was confined to her bed with a sick headache and Aunt Riekchen, enveloped in covers, embedded in cushions, had already gone in her rolling chair to the "Goldenen Traube;" there several men under the doctor's directions were to carry her and her chair into the hall. For years she had not been out of the house, but to-day—she would not have missed her darling's lecture at any price.

Julia could not help herself, she had to go. She would gladly have remained at home, but Aunt Riekchen had almost wept, when she made excuses, so she donned her best dress which was too tight for her everywhere. She felt awkward and wretched in it, and Therese said at once too, she would lend her a scarf, for the bodice fit abominably. The stylish woman would not for the world have entered the hall with the shabbily-dressed girl and now helped Julia to arrange a white silk scarf with delicate gold embroidery in tasteful folds; upon her left shoulder she fastened it with a small, Roman Mosaic brooch in the form of a dagger—it was the only souvenir Julia had of her mother, and she had brought it forth with hesitation.

They reached the already-filled hall of the inn, in which all the gas-jets were burning.

The respected citizens of Andersheim had all arrived. A seat was reserved for Therese in the first row; Julia seated herself at one side of the platform, beside old Fraulein Trautmann's chair. She could

have seen the whole room, but did not dare to raise her eyes; she was uneasy, very uneasy, as much so as if she were responsible for what her brother said and did; and her faith was slight, she doubted that he was able to lecture well.

On entering she had, attracted by Therese's vexed exclamation: "Just see how my husband looks! He has not even changed his dress!" perceived Fritz opposite against the wall with several gentlemen. Then Julia did not look over again. At length she ventured to do so and saw that his eyes were fixed upon them in astonishment. His glance perplexed her; she thought she read in it that she had adorned herself too gayly, and with a blush she again bent her head.

A certain sonnet, he could not remember, where he had read it, occurred to the doctor.

"Sie stieg vom Kapitol die Stufen nieder,
Da purpura schon die Sonne Koms versank.
Nie sah mein Auge, seit es Schönheit trank,
So stolzes Haupt, so königliche Glieder.
Als frug' ihr Reis nach keines Menchen Dank,
Hielt sie gesenkt die breiten Augentider."

He turned to "Uncle Doctor," the girl's guardian, and said to him with genuine surprise:

"Just see, what a proud butterfly the little brown chrysalis has become and how well the gold embroidered scarf suits her!"

Then he glanced at his fair young wife, and an expression of emotion flitted over his face. The most charming, the sweetest, the best in the whole hall was his! He loved her, loved her now, when she was pale, irritable, nervous, more tenderly than ever. He endeavored to obtain a glance, a bow from her—in vain; she did not look over.

The speaker now appeared. His bow was faultless, his dress too. His coat fit perfectly, and the slight pallor of his face was very interesting.

"When one," he began, "tries to relate anything, one should do it fully! Since the hour that I again stepped upon German soil, no question has been asked me oftener than 'How came you to think of going to Africa?' And I suspect that there are many here in this room who would like to know the reason which sent me to the Dark Continent. I will be frank—I have always been interested in Africa, have always watched with enthusiasm our progress there. Nothing can equal my admiration of our bold pioneers, who did not and do not shirk dangers, trials and deprivations, to explore that land. Of course, however, it required an especial shock to actuate me to participate in this work. Of what nature the shock was, would scarcely be of interest to a second and third person—let us assume, I wanted 'to heal an old sorrow in new air.' Well, enough of that! That I did not lack the firm will to be of use, to learn, yes to risk blood and life for one great object, I think I have proved.

Permit me then, sirs, to begin my description with the moment, when I, standing on the steps of the bridge of an enormous warship, which was bound for a southern sea, saw the towers and roofs of the good town of Keil grow dim in the wintry mist and heard the native water flow beneath the bow. I was possessed by a truly lamentable sensation, which caused me to look upon what I had possessed at home, what I had lost and should have avoided, as more fascinating and more unobtainable than ever, so much so that I considered myself the most unfortunate person on

earth. What the philosophers maintain is not true, that being separated from the spot in which one has suffered, will mitigate pain. Personally, longing for home troubled me a great deal."

Julia involuntarily glanced at Therese. The young wife's face was almost ghastly; her eyes were fastened greedily upon the slender man. And now he slowly turned his head toward her and for several seconds they gazed at each other with a glance which made Julia's heart beat wildly, which drove the blood into her cheeks, to such a degree that she was seized with dizziness. She did not hear her brother's words, her hands were so tightly clasped, that they pained her. She could think of only one thing—if Fritz had noticed that glance, and what would happen after such a glance and—and—great God! Up to this time she had but feared that Frieder would allow himself to be carried away by his love, that he might be unhappy, if he saw her—of Therese she had never thought, she was the wife, the adored wife of another, happy and to be envied. And now—no, it was not possible! She forced herself to be calm, she looked at Therese. She sat there with flushed cheeks, slowly waving her fan, apparently listening gravely but unmoved. Not another sign of that swift interchange of secret understanding. She looked at Fritz; he sat calmly between his father-in-law and "Uncle Doctor" and was eagerly listening to the speaker's words. She looked at the entire audience—among which were nothing but interested faces. She drew a deep breath. No one had seen the terrible occurrence but her—was it really so, was it now a dream?

Yet she could not keep her eyes off the couple. They, however, did not glance at each other any

more. Several times at some comical description everyone in the audience smiled, but Therese's lips did not move, and Julia thought she did not hear what he was saying, she was thinking—my God, she was thinking of what? The stifling, oppressive sensation stole over her again.

The lecture was finished; loud applause rang through the room. Julia saw her brother descend the two steps of the platform and raise Therese's hand to his lips with composure—then he advanced to the old lady and likewise kissed her hand.

"Fine!—Very fine!" whispered Fraulein Riekchen faintly.

"But—Frieder—no, not here—later!"

"What do you want, aunt?"

"Ah, my boy, I did not even know that trouble drove you away," said she with tears in her eyes.

He smiled. "One has to embellish one's speeches somewhat; do not worry, aunt!"

He himself pushed her invalid's chair down the narrow aisles between the seats, and Julia walked behind them, silently, with glowing cheeks and downcast eyes.

In the neighborhood of the door where the people were still congregated Julia and Aunt Riekchen met Papa Krautner. The latter suddenly turned the chair toward a side door, and beckoned the others to follow; a few seconds later the family was shown in a small by-room, in the center of which, under the chandelier stood a set table, upon which a number of glasses were placed temptingly beside each plate.

Old Herr Krautner seemed perfectly delighted with his guest's success and had resolved to entertain royally the fine fellow who had so distinguished himself.

"Now," said he, "we will drink to the welfare of the lecturer—if you please, be seated, the oysters will soon be served."

Aunt Riekchen, however, insisted upon going home immediately, and the doctor said he must go at once to a patient who was seriously ill, and would then see his aunt home. So the host bade the caterer keep the meal waiting, and proposed that the pause be employed by drinking a glass of "Genuine" in the coffee-room.

Julia was suddenly left alone with Frieder and Therese. It was not so very warm, in the shabbily furnished room, yet it seemed to her terribly sultry. Therese sat upon the sofa covered with red plush, Frieder stood at the table, reading the *menu*.

Absently Julia looked around the room, she examined the oil painting of the Emperor and the hideous hangings.

She would have gone home to soothe the agitated old lady, to see Frau Roettger whose headache usually at such times was resolved into obstinacy and scolding, and still she felt as if detained by iron braces; she did not want to leave the couple alone, after that glance, followed by his confession so clearly made for Therese's benefit, the confession, that he had only left his fatherland for her sake— To-morrow—to-morrow the mad phantom would surely disappear. At length the doctor returned, and all would be well, she thought.

She rose.

"Please, do not be vexed, if I leave," said she, "I do not think it right to leave aunt alone." Already she was at the door.

"But, Julia!" cried the doctor, following her.

She hastened with the words: "I pray you Fritz, remain!" down the stairs, seized her cloak, which hung on a nail in the cloak-room beside Therese's, and hurried out into the dark street.

Suddenly she was stopped.

"Permit me at least to see you home," said the doctor, "it is quite a distance, and there is a stretch of lonesome highroad."

"I pray you, Fritz, go! Your father-in-law will want to dine," she implored impatiently.

"Papa Krautner? He is still sitting behind another glass arguing with Uncle Doctor, so that he will not remember he has guests, until I take him by the coat sleeve. These few minutes will make no difference."

"But I do not *want* you to go!" she exclaimed, beside herself, "Do you hear, I do not *want* you!" She stamped her feet. "I can take care of myself!" By the light of the street lamp he saw an agitated, anxious face, but in the eyes gleamed a resolute will.

She turned her back upon him and walked hastily away.

He shrugged his shoulder and turned back. "Strange," said he, "she will not accept the slightest favor. My mother would call it 'beggarly pride'—or is there something else in it? I know for a fact that she does not like to be upon the street alone at night."

He entered the coffee-room and fetched his father-in-law who was angrily defending his colonial political views.

"Now, papa, we want to eat; Therese and Frieder are impatiently awaiting us up-stairs."

When they entered the young wife stood by the iron stove, her foot upon a projection of the door, and let the firelight play upon it. Frieder was just turning from the window.

'At last!" grumbled Therese, "We have waited an eternity!"

Fritz drew her to the table. "You are very warm," said he, "how can you stand so near the iron stove? You will spoil your fine complexion, you careless woman!"

She shivered. "I was so cold," she murmured, looking at the number on her napkin.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A SEED OF BITTERNESS TAKES ROOT.

"Fritz," asked Fraulein Trautmann the next day, "do you know if Frieder ever had an unhappy love affair?" The old lady had had no peace since the day before. "What did he say—'I wanted to heal an old sorrow in new air?'"

The doctor smiled.

"Aunt, those are not his words, but Paul Heyse's, and do you know—chattering belongs to the trade. Frieder knew how to make himself interesting at once to the ladies here. According to my opinion he does not look love-lorn, and—to be candid—if one goes away for such a reason, one does not inform the public of it. It may be, that he still has an old sweetheart here, whom he wishes to make believe that he went over the sea on account of her behavior. So rest easy, aunt—your Frieder is a droll fellow and knows why he spoke thus."

"Julia says so too; but he is usually so serious," sighed Fraulein Riekchen, "and he will give me no explanation."

* * * * * *

King Carnival entered the land. Gayly and merrily as usual on the Rhine, he filled the air with the sound of bells, the clattering of wooden swords, and music and dazzled the eyes with bright colors.

Therese seemed suddenly changed. Silent and irritable as she had been before, she was now possessed by a veritable wantonness. "Genuine, Rhinish blood," said the doctor laughing, as she ran about the salon in a short costume of light-blue satin interwoven with white roses, her hair powdered, and with high-heeled shoes, while he tried to catch her.

"The carriage is waiting below," he then warned, hurrying after her, "and what is still more important, mother is waiting. Come let me put on your cloak!" But she flew from one corner to the other, and finally she leaped upon the sofa, with a peculiar laugh which he had never heard before. And when he, entering into the jest, pushed the table close to it, in order to catch her, she even leaped upon the table, and he took her blissfully in his arms, as he was in the habit of doing with his boy.

She then examined him suddenly from head to foot with cold eyes and a changed expression. "This old German cap is horribly unbecominng to you!" said she.

"You look so much the more charming, Therese."

"Please, let me go!" she asked.

"Yes, under one condition."

"Oh, I know it!" She stooped quickly and bit his cheek so that the marks of her tiny teeth were upon it. Just as quickly she was upon the floor, looking at him with eyes in which was a mingled expression of disgust and anger.

He did not see it. "Well, that was more than a joke," said he quietly, wiping the painful spot with his pocket-handkerchief.

"You know I cannot bear such silliness," she replied, suddenly bursting into sobs. "Ah, this world is so

horribly stupid! And to-day is—the Carnival!"

He shook his head.

Do you know, your nerves are very much affected," said he, "and were you *my* patient, you would remain here."

The child was brought in at this juncture to kiss his mother good-bye. But he was afraid of the black velvet mask and cried, and Therese angrily bade the nurse, who was deeply insulted, to carry the child away.

For a while thereafter the house was enshrouded in silence, the young couple and Frau Roettger had gone to the ball; the child was asleep and Fraulein Trautmann likewise. Only from Julia's window still glimmered a light; she sat and worried about another's happiness and took herself to task for her nonsensical fancies. Her pure mind revolted at that which mistrust continued to awaken within her. Had she not seen *that* glance, had she not known that Therese had once broken her faith! But that was no faith such as had been pledged at the altar, the girl assured herself, no faith such as that which had been strengthened by the most sacred ties in the world. And she recalled the fair boy up-stairs in his bed, and grew more composed. Frieder would not be there much longer, and then Therese's superficial heart would regain its equilibrium. If he were but gone! Therese was not bad, surely not; she only allowed herself to be carried away by what she thought she must admire —no, she was not bad!

The girl sought to remember all the former bliss of their wedded life, in order to bring it up as a proof of Therese's fidelity. Ah, it was terrible, that she had to worry thus. No—it could not be—for Fritz!—Fritz would not bear such deception.

On the following day toward evening the doctor came from the house of his father in-law whom he was in the habit of visiting daily. Upon the steps of the villa he hesitated, considered and decided to walk through the garden, instead of along the Rhine. His limbs still ached from dancing. They had not returned home until morning, and when he was scarcely asleep, he was again rung up, to bind up the wound of a victim of the carnival, who had been struck by the beer-glass of a rival. The unpleasant scene, which was enacted in a journeymens' public-house, had completely spoiled his humor which was not of the rosiest.

Therese had been undisputed queen of the ball and had accepted the attentions of the young men, like a girl who has still the control over heart and hand. And for three-quarters of an hour he had sat in a corner, feeling vexed that such nonsense could afford a sensible woman pleasure, and forming the resolution to tell her quietly that, from that night, all visits to the assemblies must cease; for she was too nervous and dancing was not good for her. Indeed after every dance she was paler, and her eyes were feverish.

That morning he had had no opportunity to talk with her, for she was asleep, and to his surprise his mother was up-stairs to dinner. Therese had invited her to partake of the *ragout fin*, the old lady's favorite dish. Before dessert was served, the young woman again laid down. When he now reached home, he could without doubt speak with her.

It was the clear blue-gray twilight of a February evening at the end of the month, too dark to be able to distinguish objects plainly, but light enough to be just able to see. Here and there shimmered a strip

of snow lying on the edge of the lawn, and to one side gleamed like ghosts in the darkness the white-washed trunks of the trees in the orchard. Smoking his cigar, he did not take the nearest path, but went around the extensive lawn and passed the summer-house, which was situated near the wall toward the Rhine. The old gentleman had, when he bought the garden, refurnished and rebuilt the old thing, as, from its windows it afforded a fine view across the river. In the early spring he enjoyed sitting there, when it was too soon to sit out-of-doors, or late in the autumn when showers came up frequently.

In the tiny vestibule as well as in the kitchen were now lodged the strange rococo figures of the garden, which Herr Alois Krautner had bought at the auction of the Ducal park, and whose naked limbs looked so comical in toupets and shepherd's caps—the building was generally not used in winter.

Fritz walked past deep in his thoughts and almost stumbled over the broad sandstone steps, which were scarcely above the level of the road. Then he left the garden and for a while stood at the door of his own estate on the dark river. He then heard to one side a sharp, scratching sound, and descried a shadow which glided beyond the summer-house by the wall; it must have come through the window of the house. No doubt a thief! He was already preparing to follow the fugitive with long strides, then, however, he paused as if he had reconsidered it, for the unknown had long since vanished in the fog and mist of night. He thought it more sensible to turn back and to see if anything about the summer-house had been disturbed, in order if necessary to notify its owner. Perhaps a river driver had sought a comfortable night's lodging there!

The garden lay there dark and deserted, but he fancied he saw something light flit through the gate connecting it with his own garden—or did he not? He *must* have been mistaken, for on looking again, he certainly felt convinced that he had confounded it with the gleaming birch-tree by the gate, and so he walked rapidly toward the summer-house. He was surprised to find the door, generally locked at this season of the year, ajar.

In the hall he lighted his pocket-lantern and entered the tiny room.

No one there.

He opened the cupboard—the old master's garden coat hung there, his straw hat over it. On the other side stood cups, a match-box, and an old brass chafing-dish. He examined the windows; they were locked, only one blind was not bolted and it rattled somewhat. He fastened it securely and then looked farther; the rug at the sofa was pushed aside, otherwise—

Suddenly he stood up and stared as if spellbound at an object at his feet, then he stooped and picked up a light white silk scarf with goid embroidery.

"Julia's scarf," said he, himself unable to explain the sudden feeling of anger which possessed him. "Julia's scarf!" he repeated with a short laugh.

He extinguished the light in the lantern and seated himself upon the rickety piece of furniture, as if he had first to collect his strength in order to be able to grasp the unheard-of situation. A man, who leaped from the window, and Julia with him in this remote spot—alone! The proud girl who up to this time had seemed to him as pure as—ah, he could find no comparison. "That comes from the unloved manner

in which she has been reared," he murmured bitterly. "And yet—notwithstanding, it is incomprehensible! But I must warn, help, advise her!"

He rose and hastened into the open air, the scarf in his hand. It was quite dark. One of the Krautner maids met him in the vicinity of the gate joining the two estates.

"Is my wife with her father?"

"Madame has not been here at all to-day," replied the maid, "indeed no one has been but you, sir. The lieutenant has been gone several hours; I believe he was going to walk to—" she named a village near by —"I merely heard him tell master."

"Yes, I know," he answered absently, continuing on his way.

In his own house he saw a light in the nursery and in his wife's boudoir. Aunt Riekchen's rooms were dark. He opened the door and called: "Is Julia here?"

"Yes!" said the girl's deep, musical voice.

"Have you been at home all evening?'

A short silence, then a "No!"

"Pardon—where were you, Julia?"

"I"—again a pause—"how can it interest you?"

He made no reply. "Will you come to my room in fifteen minutes—to the study—for several seconds?"

"Gladly!"

Fritz repaired to his room, laid the scarf carefully on the writing-table and sought his wife.

Therese lay upon her sofa in the boudoir, the lamp was low. She looked pale and she shivered.

"Oh!" said he anxiously. "Are you going to increase my practice?"

"I am so tired," she complained.

"You should have gone out in the air a while—have you not been out at all to-day?"

"No!" she said.

"On the sofa constantly? I am not suprrised that you are cold. Have you been reading? If you would only cease reading, as soon as you feel ill."

"I should like to sleep."

"That means I am to go, child? Very well, but to-morrow I must talk seriously with you; this cannot go on, Therese!"

She started up. "What cannot go on?"

"Oh, oh! Not to-day, to-morrow! Be reasonable and sleep, I will see that all is quiet!" He nodded gravely and left the room.

"Oh, these women!" he murmured, knocking at Aunt Riekchen's door.

"Will you come, Julia?"

"Immediately!" she replied.

He went on ahead, seated himself at his work-table and turned the lighted lamp higher, then he rested his cheek upon his hand. His heart palpitated like a school boy's. Soon after she entered.

He gazed at her as she stood before him, without speaking a word. She looked grieved; her face was no longer childish. He fancied he could see upon her features something that bespoke inward struggles, secret passion.

"Julia," he began, it was difficult for him to speak, "you know you have always found in me a friend, a brother—or did you not, Julia?"

She glanced at him, and the tremor about the corners of her mouth became more accentuated; it looked almost haughty.

"Oh, certainly!" she replied.

"You can imagine that it must affect a brother deeply and painfully to discover in his sister—"

He hesitated and paced the floor; he did not know how to inform her that he had discovered her secret. "Look at this scarf!" said he at length, pointing to the texture beside the lamp.

She looked at it and then at him, calmly, with an expression of surprise.

"I just found it—you probably forgot it at your *rendezvous* in the summer-house—in the pain of parting, perhaps too—" And irritated by her composure: "Ah, Julia, child, how could you forget yourself so far!"

Her eyes opened unnaturally wide. "The scarf—I —I am supposed?—"

"Be frank with me, Julia!" he implored. "It will happen some day that you will love, but I thought that an honorable man would knock at either Aunt Riekchen's or my door as is the custom, a man who would demand your hand uprightly and honestly; I never dreamed that you—would have a lover with whom you would have to hide, who would take his departure through the window!"

She started up.

"You are mad!" she cried. "Oh, that is—that is —" Suddenly she paused and her hands groped for the back of the sofa, while she put the other before her eyes as if she were dizzy. "My God!" rang through the room.

"Yes, it is better you should not lie, but rather confide in me; everything may yet be made right. I pray you, Julia, tell me all, let me talk with the man! I am prepared, although with a heavy heart, to excuse you. You have had no mother, Aunt Reikchen did not understand how to win your love—you

have lacked affection all these years, you perhaps had not the courage to say to aunt: 'I love and am loved!' I will respect your confidence, will help you—but confess, child, tell me, who is it! It cannot go on thus; it is unworthy of you and us!"

He drew near her and stroked her hair. "Speak, Good-for-nothing, speak!" he implored.

"I cannot! I cannot! Cease!" cried she, pushing back his hand; her troubled eyes roved about the room, as if she did not know whether she was waking or dreaming.

"You cannot?"

"No! No!"

She burst into a short, nervous laugh. "Give me the scarf, I want to go!"

"No, you shall not go!" cried he violently, provoked by her laughter. "You shall not escape me! I, as the master of this house will not have people pointing their fingers at her who was treated as a daughter here—so speak, speak!"

She stepped in front of him with uplifted hand as if she wished to avenge the insult with a blow. "Point their fingers at me?" she gasped.

He seized the hand and put it down. Julia's ghastly face wore a strange expression.

"Reflect! You wore this scarf a few days ago; I saw it on you when your brother delivered his lecture. Am I mistaken? Yes or no! If you say no, I shall inquire farther as to the owner of this scarf. Speak: Yes or no?"

She bowed her head. "It is my scarf," said she almost inaudibly.

"And who was with you?"

"I cannot say."

"You will not tell me?"

"No!"

His anger got the better of him. "I never thought it possible that you would go astray," he exclaimed furiously. "Leave me—I do not want to see you again!"

She went out, the scarf in her nerveless hand, her form bent, as if crushed. At the door she threw back her head and drew herself up.

With a firm step Julia passed out of the house and through the garden. Breathlessly she arrived at the villa and asked for her brother. He was at home; she found him on the sofa, smoking a cigarette and reading. He was startled by the pale, threatening face of the girl.

"What is the matter?" he cried.

"Pack your trunk and leave at once," said she with forced composure.

"Wherefore?"

"Because you shall no longer betray an honorable man! I know all! You have had a *reudezvous* with Therese—you have been seen!"

He looked astonished but his pallor was sufficient proof that the accusation was well-founded. "The deuce, what is all this?" he grumbled sullenly. "Besides—who saw me?"

"Fritz!"

He laughed curtly. "Now there will be a row. But how does the doctor know it was Therese?"

"He does not know."

"Then what are you making such a fuss about?"

She looked at him with horror. "Fritz thinks I was there with a—" Her voice failed her.

"Ah, that is fine! I hope you let him think so?"

"Yes," said she unsteadily, "because he would not survive the knowledge that Therese could conduct herself so shamelessly."

Frieder drew himself up to his full height. "Shamelessly! No, my dear child, you do not understand this case, therefore pass no judgment! It is kind of you to assume the guilt, I am grateful to you for it and shall never forget this clever strategy—but spare Therese your criticism! She came at my request to the summer-house that we might converse undisturbed with regard to our future; she loves me and proposes to separate from Fritz—that is the whole affair!"

"She loves you?" asked the girl, before whose eyes shadows danced. "That is not true, she cannot have said that, and if so, she only imagines it. You must go away, Frieder, this very day, if you are a man of honor! I will send your effects! Therese will come to her senses, I know it—but make your preparations, there is no time to lose!"

In feverish haste she fetched his hat and overcoat.

"Do not excite yourself," said he calmly, "all will come right. I will go when the time comes and circumstances have been arranged!"

"All will come right, you say?" cried she, with sparkling eyes. "Is it right to render the best, the noblest man miserable?"

"It is retribution!" he answered, rolling another cigarette. "He took my betrothed from me; how he managed it, I do not know, probably under the mask of the man of honor, which suits him excellently. Moreover, the retribution came without my co-operation—Therese confessed to me that at our first meeting again the old love awakened."

Julia with a silent gesture of repugnance turned to go; she felt miserable.

"Where are you going?" he called after her. "I advise you to do nothing absurd, or else—"

"To Therese," she murmured.

She never knew how she reached the tiny boudoir. There her lips were sealed and her teeth clenched —beside Therese's bed, bending over her whose face was covered with a handkerchief, stood the betrayed husband, inquiring with an anxious air as to the condition of the wife who had deceived him! When Julia turned to go, she heard him call Therese "darling."

In her anguish she thought of appealing to Frau Roettger, but fortunately she remembered in time that this lady would immediately stir up the whole household, that there was no possibility of making good the wrong, that his happiness was ruined for ever. And yet, something *must* be done! Suddenly old Krautner occurred to her and she rushed to the door.

"Where are you going?" cried Frau Roettger's voice behind her. "It is not the fashion with us to take walks at night, my young lady! The girls of our family remain modestly at home at night." And passing her by, Frau Minna locked the door and, with intentional significance, thrust the key in her pocket.

Now Julia knew that the old lady had listened, that this very evening the maids in the kitchen would repeat the welcome news with every possible embellishment. She could have cried aloud with rage and pain. At this moment the doctor came downstairs. He went toward his study and did not turn his head as he said: "I beg that my wife be not disturbed any more this evening."

She looked after him in silence, infinite pity stifled her anger. She went to her bedroom; it was impos-

sible for her to bid Aunt Riekchen "Good-night," impossible to seek her couch. She felt as if the close walls would suffocate her, the air seemed to her insufferably hot. With nervous haste she threw open the window. Then she began to pace the room, restlessly, wringing her hands. From time to time she passed them mechanically over her aching brow, upon which lay her damp, short hair. It was long past midnight when she ceased her walk.

She carried a chair to her commode and pulled out the upper drawer. There lay, neatly arranged, the trifling treasures of her joyless youth. Absently she took up first this and then that paste-board box and examined the contents. There were the beloved forbidden ear-rings, there was her mother's pin, the little dagger with the Mosaic hilt; there a couple of books of poems, which Fritz had given her on her confirmation, finally a book with blank pages, upon the brown leather cover of which in gilt letters stood the word "Diary."

It had been a Christmas gift from Therese, one of those gifts which are carelessly chosen and only given, because one has to give something; on the first holiday she had put it in the commode with the other more or less useless gifts, not without first smiling bitterly. What were the leaves to her, they would remain as blank as her life! What had she to write down! Yet, once she had dipped her pen in the ink and written a few words in the large, strong characters peculiar to her:

Wie meine Tage vergehen?
Ich will es kunden Euch gleich—
Es macht mich kein einziger ärmer,
Und auch kein einziger reich!

Und wisst Ihr, warum ich so trube,
Warum ich so trotzig mag sein?
Ich hatte viel Durst nach Liebe,
Und niemand schenkte mir ein.

Wohl sah ich rin Glase blinken
Des Lebens goldigen Wein,
Sah alle die andern trinken
Mich aber lud keiner ein.

Nur einmal hat es geschienen,
Als käm' urphlötzlich das Gluck—
Es bot mir einer den Becher,
Den vollen, mit freudigem Blick.

Und zaub' risch spielten die Farben
Wohl auf des Kelches Grund—
Fassen wollt' ich ihn, heben
Und trinken mein Herze gesund.

Doch wie ich mich beugte, zu nippen,
Da brach das Glas in Stuck.—
Und durstig blieben die Lippen
Und ferne blieb das Gluck.

Das ists', warum ich so trube,
Warum ich so trotzig mag sein;
Ich wallte nicht Mitleid fur Liebe—
Nun bin ich ewig *allein!*"

The poem was an explanation of her sorrowful, defiant manner, caused as she said by her thirst for love being ungratified. In this poem she made an allusion to the cup being held to her lips, and as she was about to drink, it was shivered to atoms.

She smiled, almost compassionately, and wondered that she could ever have composed a rhyme. Then the thought occurred to her, how ashamed she would be if ever any other person's eye should read that, and her fingers longed to tear the leaf out of the book, to destroy it. But her hand again fell—an idea flashed through her brain which she tried vainly to dispel,

for she considered it blamable. The book fell upon the floor, she put her arms on the chest of drawers and hid her glowing face upon them. Why did she want to play the part of the victim, of the angel of peace? Why force the woman to remember her fidelity? What did it concern her if Therese left him for another? Would he not then be free? And he would outlive the blow, surely! A man like him does not die when he loses something that henceforth must be worthless to him. And even, if he never learned of his wife's infidelity—what could such a wife be to him, who had first to be brought back to her duty, brought back forcibly? It could never again be a happy union, never! He need not to have been the sensitive person he was in order not to feel that only a with difficulty patched-together sense of duty kept his wife at his side! Would it be worse for him to make the discovery now that he was betrayed? Had she done right in concealing the truth from him? The desire to shield him from the loss of his loved one, the pity, the mercy, which asks, which seeks nothing for itself—had rushed in upon her on this day, when she declared the scarf to be hers. But had she not been ridiculous, the victim of an over-strained feeling?

Her heart rebelled against the misery of the future, which would be more desolate, more lonesome for her—yet on all sides sweet, hopeful dreams whispered in her ear. He would be *free*, he would some day be hers, she would spread her hands beneath his feet, would make him forget all, and his child—

Ah, the child!

The child was to lose his mother?

"And what a mother!" said the rebellious heart.

She was nevertheless his mother, and Therese's soul

could not be so utterly abandoned but for that son's sake she would bless the hour in which she sacrificed her dream of love to remain with her husband—

Julia raised her head, and her burning, dry eyes looked resolutely around the small room.

What will become of you? asked the tempting voice.

She did not know. She had already borne so much, why not that too, that she should be considered a frivolous person, neglectful of her honor? But no, that she would not bear, his contempt! It would be best if she were to die! In this case it would not be cowardice, surely not!

Oh, beautiful life, golden youth! How many years still lay before her, and when she went out independently in the world she must undoubtedly find some place where there would be peace for her, where she could breathe and see the sun and the lovely world!

There—what was that? Up-stairs over her room a door was violently closed, and she could now distinctly hear Therese's weeping voice. Now familiar foosteps passed through the hall, the creaking of a door—Fritz had entered his study. What did that mean? Had Therese—Julia's limbs suddenly became as heavy as lead; she stood there motionlessly and listened. The sobs up-stairs grew more violent, she could distinguish the old nurse's voice.

Julia made a hasty resolution and went out. The deep silence of night reigned in the house. The lamp in the hall was burning, it was never put out until morning; Fritz wished to have it so, in case he should be summoned to a patient in the night. Julia ascended the stairs; upon the last step sat the cat which blinked at her drowsily; the old hall-clock struck three, as Julia passed.

Therese's sobs could now be heard more plainly, they sounded like the sobs of a spoiled child who can not have his own way. Julia passed through the nursery. By the shimmer of the night-lamp she saw the pretty little head of the sleeping boy among the snowy pillows and the nurses' empty bed. The door leading to Therese's bedroom was ajar and the old woman was just saying: "Come, madame, calm yourself and drink this water. Of what use is it to weep so? You will only make yourself ill."

Without any further delay Julia entered. "What ails you, Therese?" she asked, advancing to the bedside of the young woman, who was weeping bitterly and wringing her hands in despair.

"God be praised, miss, that you have come!" grumbled the nurse, setting the sweetened water upon the table and disappearing in the nursery.

Therese started up and stared at Julia.

"I heard you crying down-stairs," said the latter, as she carefully closed the door behind the old woman. "What ails you? Are you ill?"

"No, but I shall be after such treatment!" cried Therese, pulling at the lace with which the blue silk coverlet was trimmed.

"Who has treated you so badly?"

"Who? Absurd! Fritz, of course! If one is not pleased with everything, one is disagreeable, childish! And I said nothing but this: What had he to write so eternally at—he came in again half an hour ago. And then—" she began to sob again—"then one word brought on another, and I finally said—"

The young wife ceased speaking and a defiant, resolute expression appeared upon her face.

"Then you said," added Julia very slowly, "it would

be best to leave him and to marry Lieutenant Adami."

Therese stared at the speaker, as if a horrible phantom were at her bedside. "What do you mean by that?" she gasped.

"Nothing more than what you have known positively since this afternoon and to which you have been drawing near for weeks. But you are beginning in a very petty way," she continued. "To goad the man who loves you with all his soul into agreeing to a separation by such pitiful artifice, is abominable, senseless. Have you not the courage to tell him calmly? You had the courage to talk it all over with Frieder."

Therese sank back as if on the verge of a swoon.

"Who told you that?"

"Chance—and Frieder confirmed it."

The room was quiet. Julia's eyes roved about the cozy chamber; then they again turned upon the woman who lay there motionless gazing at her with an anxious, distressed look.

"Will you listen to me?" asked Julia, without leaving her post at the foot of the bed; she leaned lightly against the nut-wood footboard. "I would beg of you, Therese—"

"Do not reproach me," interrupted the young wife violently, "I cannot help loving Frieder—you do not understand that—certainly, you do not."

"I do not understand it, no! That is, I understood once, that you loved Frieder—"

"You all were against my marrying him," she murmured.

'That is not true!" replied Julia firmly.

"Not true? My father threatened me with disinheritance and you—refused to help me."

"An honorable, constant love would have forced your father."

"Absurd! It is very well for you to talk—but young as I was at the time—"

"That is no excuse for your behavior. At any rate, you accepted Fritz and you will *remain* with him, Therese."

"No! I cannot, I no longer love him! I pray you, leave me! You never had any liking for me, and cannot sympathize with me, you do not want to! Please go!"

"Not until you have promised me to write Frieder to go away at once!"

"No! No!'

"How can you breathe in the desperate condition in which you are?" exclaimed Julia beside herself. "Either you must write now to Frieder and put an end to this nonsense forever—or you must tell Fritz all to-morrow!"

"Never—I am afraid!" cried Therese, and her teeth chattered.

"Then I shall go to your father."

"You will not do that! What does it concern you? What right have you to set yourself up as my judge, you, who are no better!"

Julia looked at the young wife aghast. I?" said she.

"Yes, you! Or do you think I do not know that you love Fritz passionately? That you grudged him to me?"

An ashen pallor overspread Julia's face.

Again a pause. From the adjoining room came the whimpering voice of the child.

"Therese," said Julia, and rushing in she knelt beside the bed. "Listen—you have not thought of your child which loves you both!"

Therese impatiently turned aside. "Oh, I wish it had never been born!" she cried.

"You are committing a sin, Therese—"

"It may be; it may too be that I am wicked, but I can not help it, nor do I want to."

"And your old father?"

"My father?" Therese laughed mockingly. "My father is more deeply in love with your brother than I am—have you not noticed it?"

"Yes, he likes him; but did he know that he was harboring a deceiver—"

"A deceiver? We are deceiving no one! If Fritz had not been so wrapped up in himself—he would have seen for months, that I—"

"That you were deceiving him, yes. But with his upright character, he cannot imagine such a thing! You must excuse him, Therese, he does not dream that it is possible you could desert him. And with what right do you do so, Therese? Upon what grounds do you base your desertion?"

"I have no other grounds, save this: that I love Frieder, have always loved him and would have remained his, had I not been separated from him," concluded the exasperated woman.

Julia strove to maintain her composure. "Once more, Therese, will you write Frieder to go away?"

"No, not a word! And as a man of honor he would not go. Do you think he would leave me alone in this position? That request would be vain. But rest easy, I shall return to my father's house, and all will be arranged peaceably—only do not torture me any longer now! Besides," she added, "the matter must soon end now, so that it can be decided if Frieder will again become a soldier, or if we shall travel, for after—"

"I will go to Frieder once more to-morrow morning," interrupted Julia. "There must still be within him one spark of consideration and respect for the house whose hospitality he is enjoying."

Therese shrugged her shoulders and leaned back among the cushions. At the door Julia hesitated and once more looked at the infatuated woman, who persistently closed her tear-swollen eyes and whose clenched fists lay upon the coverlet. She closed the door without another word.

"Oh, you poor boy!" whispered the girl, as she bent over the boy's bed in the nursery, and from the pillows the nurse sobbed: "Ah, miss, how can one so boldly destroy his happiness. You do not know what master has borne of late and what angelic patience he has had with his wife."

"She is ill, Doris, it will be different after a while."

'Yes, yes, if she has her way, otherwise not!"

Julia descended to her room, but she did not know what to do. Sleep? Her nerves were unstrung, she could not. She began to disrobe; the cool water did her hot cheeks good, for they still burned from the conversation with Therese. How miserable this world was! In what could one believe if not in the fidelity of a wife, in the love of a mother?

She stepped to the window and looked out over the gardens which were enveloped in mist. Nothing was to be seen of the river and the island, nothing but a bluish vapor which hid everything. What would the day bring forth? It was still veiled. When night came—who knew what would have taken place?

CHAPTER XXIV.

WHICH WAS THE GREATER GRIEF.

By the lamp, whose reddish-yellow light was mingled with the gray light of morning, sat the doctor in his study, before him the volume in which he had been writing, the pen still in his hand.

He was thinking of something quite different from the scientific question upon which he had been writing and of which he was to treat at the next medical congress. What ailed Therese? This was no longer obstinacy and caprice, it was a serious nervous attack, and immediate remedy was necessary! Where was his golden happiness? Where the delightful hours in her tiny boudoir, the jubilant frolics of mother and child, at which he could never gaze enough? He pondered. When had he noticed the first signs of her changed mood?

Then a pale, beautiful face arose before his eyes, a pair of sparkling dark eyes—Julia. He angrily shook his head and seized the pen, mingled feelings of contempt and compassion stole over him.

Should she be left there? No one knew what her relations were—who should look after her? The old, paralyzed aunt? His all too-severe mother?

Yes, that was the reason—she had been treated no better than a maid; she could have no pleasures like other young girls of her age, now she was taking her

revenge. And yet—it could not be possible! Her face could not deceive thus!

"Ah, what trouble one has with women folks?" said he aloud, as if trying to shake off his sad thoughts by a jest. "One is ill, the other—still worse!"

And he arose with the heavy limbs of a man who, instead of spending the night in bed, spent it in a chair, gathered together the papers and prepared to go up-stairs to Therese. He had left her in anger and by rights a doctor should never lose patience. She was ill surely! Poor little woman, who knows how far into the night she sobbed.

In the hall stood his mother with an angry air, her gray morning dress hastily fastened, the cap with lilac ribbons awry upon her carelessly combed hair.

"It is high time, Fritz, for you to speak to Julia's guardian, and if you do not do it, I shall go. This morning when the maids rose the door into the garden was unlocked and Fraulein Julia's room empty. If you keep her indoors at night she runs away in the morning—for heaven's sake, who would have thought it!"

He looked up with an expression of melancholy surprise. He saw in his mother's hand the scarf he had found the day before.

She observed his inquiring glance. "I just picked it up, it was laying on the stairs," she continued indignantly. "That is the way Julia treats things. If it was her scarf, but Therese lent it to her out of pity, and—"

"The scarf belongs to Therese?" he asked.

"Yes!" said from above the voice of Therese's maid, and the buxom blonde descended the stairs and extended her hand for the scarf. "Mistress missed it last night and told me to look for it."

"The scarf belongs to my wife?"

"Yes, sir, Fraulein Julia only wore it once on the evening when the lieutenant lectured at the 'Traube.' She returned it the next day, and now—"

"When did my wife lose the scarf?" The man's voice sounded so hollow that the old lady looked at him in surprise.

"I do not know," said the girl; "but I believe madame wore it last night when she went into the garden."

"Very well, I will give the scarf to my wife myself."

He took it and advanced toward the stairs, again he turned irresolutely and finally he ascended them. It seemed to Frau Roettger as if he were stumbling, and she saw him grasp the balusters.

Therese was still in bed; the room smelled of Eau de Cologne and ether. With heavy steps Fritz entered, approached the window and drew aside the curtains to admit the daylight. Now he turned to his wife, and held out the scarf with a hand which trembled.

"Is this your scarf, Therese?"

"Why do you ask?" said she. "Why?"

"Is this your scarf, Therese?"

"Yes!"

"Since when have you missed it?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "Since yesterday, I believe," she answered indifferently. Then, terrified, she stared at him. "For God's sake, Fritz!" she gasped —it was the glance which once before had inspired her with horror!

"Collect yourself, said he, "you must tell me later on where you lost the scarf. I will return, when I —am calmer."

And flinging the scarf upon a table he left the room. Below in the hall he took his cane and hat, and walked hastily through the streets to the main road. To the right branched off a field-path, bordered by bare fruit trees; into this he turned. As he walked he took off his hat and allowed the February air to blow upon his brow—moving on—ever on. But before his eyes floated a white scarf with a border of gold threads, before his eyes arose the place in which he had found it—the tiny, dimly-lighted room with the old-fashioned sofa, so far from the world, as cosy as possible. And there, before the sofa, the scarf had lain! Now came the memories, and formed link by link an obnoxious chain.

Had he been deaf and blind? Everything returned to him. He had once entered the dining-room hastily, at which moment Frieder rose from his knees with the greatest composure and said, he could not find the ball of thread . . . yes, yes, Frieder—Frieder!

The doctor had walked like a madman; suddenly he found that he was at the gate of a small village in which he had a patient seriously ill. She might die and de-compose!

He turned again. A child ran after him, a little boy with fair hair and blue eyes. "Doctor, please come in to mother," he said, catching hold of his coat. The man stared at the child and followed him to the cottage. He was reminded of his own boy.

When he came out, he took the shortest road home. The child! Ah, to be sure, the poor child! His eyes filled with tears.

In a little while he was again in town, and had he not been so engrossed with his own thoughts, he would have perceived that the people were staring at him,

and that the women in the cottages opened their windows to look after him. From a fisherman's hut on the Rhine emerged an old man. He was dripping wet and his white hair was uncovered. When he saw the doctor he first paused in embarrassment, then he advanced.

"Sir," said he with hesitation, "I believe you are wanted at home."

"I? At home?"

"Yes, sir; they have sought you everywhere, because —do not be startled, sir, I believe, one of your family has been taken ill."

The doctor mechanically touched his hat and hastened homeward, his heart filled with mortal anguish.

Then he heard an old woman say: "Oh God! I should not like to be the one to have to tell him!" He knew now that some misfortune had befallen!

In a few seconds he reached his house. Whither should he turn? At the back door traces of water were to be seen which reached to the stairs on the first floor. So it was up-stairs. . .

On the stairs stood his father-in-law. The old man convulsively grasped the arm of the man who was rushing up. He tried to speak but he could not; the tears rolled down his cheeks. "In the drawing-room," he gasped at length, waving his hand. "Do not judge her too severely, she has been heavily punished."

In the center of the luxurious room with its blue decorations had been placed the child's bed, beside it a table with pillows and cloths. The man reeled and supported himself with a groan against the railing of the bed.

"Is it you?" he cried out, lifting the small rigid form, "Had it to be you—you?"

Upon the other side of the bed, her hands twisted in her half loosened hair, lay a trembling, sobbing woman. "Fritz, forgive me, forgive me!"

He did not look at her; he still held the child in his arms, then he snatched a cloth from the table, laid it over the still face and left the room with the corpse.

Silence reigned behind him.

Down-stairs to his room he bore him, there he laid him upon the sofa and locked the doors. He then threw his arms in despair over his silent darling and listened with wild anguish for the pulsation of the tiny heart—in vain—all in vain!

"It had to be you—you!" he cried.

He did not ask how it had happened—there was no reply; for hours he let the people knock in vain. At length in the evening his mother cried—"At least come to Julia, she needs your help!"

The old lady was startled when her son opened the door.

"God in heaven, Fritz!" she sobbed, "Fritz, control your feelings. Think of your old mother."

"What ails Julia?" he asked harshly.

"Good Lord, she tried to save the child, and was almost drowned herself! A while ago she was conscious, but now she is lying there so rigid!"

He put his hand to his brow, then he entered the girl's room. The old lady closed the door behind him, and he approached the bed alone. Upon the chest of drawers a candle flickered and lighted up the girl's pale face which lay on the pillow with an unnatural, fixed expression.

"Julia!" said he softly. She opened her eyes and recognized him.

"Fritz!" She extended her hands to him. "Fritz,

I would so gladly have died in his stead." And the pent-up suffering of years found vent in the sobs which now burst forth.

He could not speak, but he stooped and raised her hand to his lips.

* * * * * *

"Yes, you see, Fritz," said Frau Roettger half an hour later to her son, as old Doris laid 'her boy' in the tiny casket, "you see, Fritz, she had the child's hand; I met her on the stairs and asked: 'Therese, are you going to take the child with you in this wind?' 'Only to papa,' she replied. So I was satisfied and went into the kitchen, whence I could see her going down the middle path so rapidly that the little fellow could scarcely follow her. Once more I saw the red cap between the bushes, but I thought of nothing then. Suddenly I heard Julchen scream, and saw her rush down the walk, and when I got down there, Julchen was in the water, and I saw the boy's red cap swimming on it, and the people coming in a boat. Julchen disappeared altogether, finally she brought up the child, and as they took him from her, she disappeared again and then rose, pushing away the pole which she should have laid hold of, and the old fisherman said it looked as if she did not want to be saved at any price, and they drew her in like one dead. We fetched old 'Uncle Doctor' and his new partner, but you were not to be found. Of course you would not have been able to help our little darling."

"Will you not go up to Therese?" she then asked. "Good Lord, she is to blame, for she forgot altogether that she had taken the boy with her, and the little

thing wandered alone to the Rhine—but fancy, how much she needs consolation!"

"No, mother," said he, "she does not need my consolation."

She tied a black apron over her dress and herself went up to her daughter-in-law. But on opening one room after the other, she found them all unoccupied, strangely empty and still.

"Where is your mistress?" she asked at length with wildly beating heart in the kitchen, where the maids sat idly with anxious faces.

"At her father's," replied the cook.

The old lady went over to the villa. Therese was in the room she had occupied as a girl, she would see no one, they said, but Herr Krautner was at liberty. Frau Roettger entered the old gentleman's room. In affright they gazed at each other. "For God's sake, is not one misfortune enough?" asked the lady, looking with dread at the man's face which bespoke more trouble.

He turned abruptly, and as he could not speak, he began to whistle. Finally he advanced.

"When my Hannchen died, neighbor, I thought nothing worse could happen. To-day I know it was a trifling sorrow compared with the one which now rends my heart. It too concerns you. My daughter —God knows, how it came about—came to me this morning and said she wants to leave Fritz. Formerly I could scold and rebuke, but to-day, I could not find a syllable. And when she said she loved Frieder Adami and after the divorce would marry him, I could indeed say nothing at all; only inwardly, when I blamed myself and called myself a donkey who thought he could make everything all right, and who did not re-

member that one cannot know any human heart, not even that of his own flesh and blood. Finally I asked: 'And your child, Therese?' Just then they fished the boy out of the water dead."

The old lady sank speechlessly into a chair. "Oh, my boy! My poor boy!" came slowly from her lips. The old man pressed her hand and nodded his gray head. Finally he said:

"I can do nothing, she is beyond my control, and I was so happy that she obtained that honorable man. If it would help matters—how gladly would I give up my old life! But, neighbor, there is One above us who guides all destinies, as my Hannchen always said. Submit—neighbor—submit!"

CHAPTER XXV.

TOGETHER, BUT FAR APART.

At the funeral Therese once more appeared in her husband's house; a long crape veil was before her face. The man who accompanied her, had suddenly become old, his once so erect form was bowed; he sought the most retired corner of the hall, in which the service was to be held. Everyone knew, everyone judged—his honorable name seemed to him dragged in the mire.

"If the boy had lived," he murmured, "she would have come to her senses, and he would have forgiven her—but now—" And he glanced covertly at the tiny coffin which was almost hidden by flowers, and on both sides of which stood the mourners—*he* here and *she* there—their blighted happiness between them!

Frau Roettger with a pale, rigid face took her stand by the side of her daughter-in-law. She wanted to force people to believe that it was all idle chatter—the rumor of a great scandal, such as the chroniclers of Andersheim had not recorded within the memory of man. If she stood beside the young women, no one could believe it, surely not!

The clergyman spoke of a common sorrow which draws hearts together more firmly than all the joys of life—it sounded like mockery.

Not a muscle of the doctor's pale face quivered.

All had been taken from him, faith in God and in mankind, faith and—his life's happiness!

The clergyman concluded his address; the coffin was carried out and the procession formed.

Fritz approached the old man who was sobbing. "Come, grandpapa," he implored, "we will go together."

CHAPTER XXVI.

TEMPEST TOSSED ON ROUGH SEAS.

Suddenly all was quiet in the hall; Therese alone still stood there, motionless in front of the black trestle, which had held the coffin, Frau Roettger next her.

"Come into my room!" said the old lady. And Therese followed her; she was almost unconscious of what she did. On reaching the room she seated herself upon the tiny elevation at the window and leaned her head upon the sewing table, then she eagerly took the glass of wine the old lady offered her.

When she had swallowed the contents she sat there in silence until the doctor returned.

His mother met him in the hall. "Fritz, she is yet in there, will you not become reconciled?"

He looked at the old lady from head to foot. "No!" was the curt reply, and he entered his own chamber.

Frau Roettger returned to Therese. "Fritz is here —will you not go to him?"

Therese rose.

"You are the guilty one, do not forget that, when you are standing before him!"

But Therese did not reply. She pulled her veil over her face and went out. And when she looked out, she saw the black train of Therese's gown sweep over the threshold of the house. Her daughter-in-law had gone, without an attempt at a reconciliation.

In despair Frau Roettger hurried to her son's room. He sat in one corner of the sofa, his head resting in his left hand and looked up at her absently.

"You might have spoken the first word," sobbed she. "You know Therese is a spoiled child. Now she is gone, and you will never make up."

He shook his head impatiently. "Do not speak of it," said he, "please, leave me alone!"

"Ah, you were surely very severe with her! She has done nothing really wrong as yet—Frieder *was* once her lover; she would probably have come to her senses again—"

"I pray you—leave me!" he groaned.

She left the room in tears. She meant to do good. In the ante-room stood Luischen with a letter. "For the doctor," said she. His mother returned once more and delivered over his letter to him. Fritz broke the seal when the old lady was gone. It was a letter from Adami. He was at his service and awaited further news.

Fritz shrugged his shoulders and laughed curtly.

Then he resumed his brooding. Honor demanded that he fight a duel with the destroyer of his happiness —very well, he would not fail him. Rules could not be broken! But it was a matter of indifference to him, whether the person who had been his enemy from childhood, lived or not; whether he shared that life with her, who had turned from her husband, or not. What was it all to him? Not a trace of the passionate desire to punish the purloiner of his wife, the desire which had raged within him only the day before, any longer moved him. Since the moment that the clods rolled over the little casket all was dead and still within him, except the gnawing pain at the loss of his darling.

Existence lay before his eyes like a desolate waste of snow in the twilight; upon this path he was to wander *alone*, aimlessly—horribly!

He moaned like an animal mortally wounded, and when the bell without rang, he bolted his door. What cared he for the people who required his help? No one helped him—let them knock—

The day drew to a close, twilight gradually filled the corners of the room—he still sat there. Suddenly he started up, he had distinctly heard a sweet little voice cry "Papa". Ah, what inconsolable grief! The small rosy lips were silenced forever, there would be no more games, no clear laughter, no sweet cradle-song. And up-stairs the abode of their mutual happiness, love, peaceful life, lay forsaken and unoccupied—only an unpleasant aftertaste remained after all the sweets. Oh, were there but something in the world to which he could cling! But what had he left? His mother was vexed that he was not over-rigid in dragging out a life of pretense—even the dog had followed Therese.

Then came a faint knock at the door and a languid but infinitely tender voice said: "Fritz, will you not come to the table? It would be well, if you would eat something."

"Julia!" he murmured, and rising he opened the door.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AT LAST.

Three years have elapsed, three wonderfully quiet years. Up-stairs in the old house the shutters are closed, and the sunbeams which peep through the crevices, look upon empty rooms. Dust lies upon the floor. The garden is shadier, for the bowers and the vines cannot be trimmed—Doctor Roettger does not wish to see the river; nor has he ever entered the garden again. Where formerly had been the door of communication leading to the Krautner estate, a peach-tree spread its branches in the form of an espalier over the new wall, and the acacias which were planted along the wall have grown very high.

The house is very quiet. Aunt Riekchen was just buried the week before, her rolling-chair stands up-stairs in the attic beside "boy's" first bed, and Julia had spread a cover over it.

It is again May, a delightful, sunny May-day. The windows in Aunt Riekchen's room are wide open, and Julia stands there assorting the letters which, at the old lady's request, she is to burn. The letter too lies there which arrived half an hour before her death, bearing the post-mark "Rome."

Frieder writes:

"Dear Aunt:— Several days since my wife returned from Germany. She regrets not having seen you, but under the circumstances it was impos-

sible. Herr Krautner died unreconciled with us, and surprised us unpleasantly by his will; he appointed a nephew, of whose existence Therese was scarcely aware, co-heir, in such a way that he is the favored one. We shall now have to economize. It is fortunate that we have no children!

"Therese does not like Rome very well; she wants to find some other place. We have tried nearly all the Italian cities, we shall now go to Florence; she does not care to return to Germany.

"I am sorry the old man was so implacable; to be frank, I am beside myself! I should have liked to have brightened the evening of your life by the gift of a small annuity, but now it is out of the question. When Therese reached Eisenach—she traveled day and night—she found the co-heir already at the villa, which the old man had built for himself at the foot of the Wartburg. He is said to be a handsome man, a model high-forester. The two seem to have come to terms tolerably well.

"I feel very well satisfied here, it is native air to me. God bless you!

"Your affectionate nephew,

"Frieder Adami."

"P. S. I sought out my father's grave but could not find it. You see, I wanted to keep my promise."

Julia put this letter with the rest in the basket by her side. The old lady could not be informed of its contents, Julia was not affected by it.

Frieder had resigned and married Therese. What had become of them no one scarcely knew, for Aunt Riekchen told very little about her letters which she

rarely received. She had never recovered from the catastrophe; she grew quieter and quieter, then her mind became affected and she spoke of Frieder only as a child, and complained that Fritz and he could not agree. For Julia, however, she had formed a touching, grateful affection. The beautiful, silent maiden now knew that she was necessary to one, that one was listening for her footstep, her voice; and her efforts to help the sufferer were indefatigable. Before the dying woman drew her last breath, she turned her eyes, through which clearly beamed the departing soul, upon her adopted daughter's face and her lips moved.

Julia bent over her and heard these words:

"Thank you! May God reward you for your faithfulness!" Holding the hand of the weeping maiden in hers, Aunt Riekchen died.

That too was over. Julia was free, as free as the bird which sat upon the bough of the budding apple-tree and warbled its lay. Now it spread its wings and flew away, up into the blue sky, the laughing, blooming world.

She too must spread her wings—but her flight would be timid, fearful. She could not remain here. Who wanted her? Frau Roettger, who lived in strict retirement, did not need her. And he? Ah, he had only thought for his books and his sick! With the regularity of a clock he went away early, returned for his consulting hours, and when they were over, the carriage stood without and he paid his visits in the vicinity of the town, for he was the most skilful physician in the district since the death of "Uncle Doctor," and was hardly able to attend to his practice. Half of the night he spent at his writing-table. He

lived only for duty—he no longer felt the emptiness of the house; he passed through his deserted life with a firm step and an unmoved face. Yet all the children followed him, and all the old ladies liked him and said he was, too, a doctor for the heart. Only here, here his lips seemed sealed, here where every corner recalled his past happiness.

Julia looked about sadly, before she again closed the old writing-desk, and took the basket in order to consign the letters to the kitchen-fire.

She *must* go, she was superfluous here!

Towards evening she entered Frau Roettger's room. The old lady sat knitting behind her geranium pots and looked out upon the quiet court-yard. She had been cutting asparagus for supper a while since and was now resting; she was still active about the house and did not shirk anything.

"After supper I will go to the cemetery," said she, perceiving the girl, "in case Fritz should come home later, Luischen must cook him fresh asparagus. Have you finished putting things in order?"

"Yes, aunt, I have, and I wanted to speak to you—you see, Aunt Riekchen appointed me heiress of her small heritage; it was so good of her—"

"It was her duty," said Frau Roettger dryly.

"But," continued Julia, "I must ask you, aunt, to give the dear, old furniture space in the house here, for I cannot take it with me."

"Take it with you? Where to?"

"Why, aunt, into the world—what shall I do here?"

"Yes, indeed, when one considers it in a proper light, what should you do here? Well, for my part the things can stay here until the millennium; there is room enough in the house. Good Lord!" She took

the needle which she had just knit off and ran it through her white hair, while her glasses grew dim; she had to wipe them before she could continue her knitting. "I never thought I should have so lonely an old age," she murmured. "But it is so, and you are right, what should you do here? I am still active —Well, I hope you may be happy, you deserve it. And once more—with regard to the things, leave them over there, they will not inconvenience me; and should Fritz ever again become reasonable, there is room enough up-stairs for new happiness."

With these words she rose and bade Luischen prepare the meal, for she wanted to go soon. "You probably are not yet hungry," said she to Julia, "you can eat with Fritz when he comes."

Julia nodded and went out into the garden where she sat and looked dreamily at the sunbeams which glinted through the branches of the nut-tree and danced upon the old garden-table.

In a little while Frau Roettger came along the middle path and cut off the budding roses. "These were Riekchen's favorites," said she, pointing to the half-wild rose-bushes, "I will take the first for her." Then she proceeded toward the churchyard, and when she came upon her son at a street corner, she merely said: "I am going to the graves, Fritz. You can eat alone to-night! Ah, what do you think! Julchen wants to go away, out into the world. We cannot keep her, now that Riekchen is dead."

He stood there and looked at the dark form with the rosebuds in her hand, but did not utter a word, he merely nodded absently and walked on through the lively street, in which the children were playing and which beneath the beams of the sun seemed enveloped

in a golden dust. Only a few calls were to be paid, but while, as a rule, he sat patiently at the bedside, to-day he scarcely seated himself, and his face expressed unrest and anxiety. He himself did not know how it happened that he took the shortest way home through a side lane, which led to the river. Never had he been there since that day of horror; to-day he looked in surprise at the blue-green magnificent water. Those waves, which had robbed him of his child, into which a young life had plunged bravely to save his dearest treasure, had long since flown away—could he blame the other, which now flowed by so crystal pure and innocently, for it?

Ah, how far he could see to-day, how far! There came a steamer, now it turned and lay alongside of the pier; there upon the deck stood a woman's form, tall and slender, and in her hand a white handkerchief waved farewell greetings? The form danced before his eyes—if it were Julia!

Hastily advancing he removed his hat from his head, and his hair, upon which a light rime lay, brushed the elder-flowers which overhung the narrow path. As he was about to ascend the steps to his garden, he saw a rosebud lying upon the stones—his mother had probably lost it—he stooped and picked it up. Ah! the fragrance of a rose! Had he been dead, dead for years?

His feet now hesitated—Julia was sitting under the nut-tree. She looked at him with the sweet, dark eyes, as gentle, as patient as through all the time of trial. She rose and advanced to meet him.

"Fritz!" There was a trace of joyousness in her voice. "You in the garden? But it is a grand evening! Would you not like your tea here?"

He nodded, seated himself upon the bench and with sorrowful eyes watched her walk quickly and elastically up the walk. How would it be, when that step no longer resounded in the house?

Suddenly something flew through the air, and fell at the girl's feet; she stooped, picked up a bright, child's ball, and soon after from behind the wall of the neighboring garden arose a fair head, while a pair of longing eyes looked over. "Catch!" cried Julia, throwing the ball back, and when the child laughingly obeyed the command, she laughed too, and these sounds touched the man's heart so that it awoke from its long slumber, swelled with a yearning for happiness, for full, golden, human bliss.

In a few minutes Julia returned with the dishes, she looked more charming than ever in her delight at seeing him again in the garden after three years.

He sat there and twisted the rosebud between his fingers; his face twitched strangely. The food she offered him he scarcely touched. A silence ensued; she too was silent as she watched the setting sun.

Suddenly Fritz rose and stepped up to Julia.

"Julia, mother says you intend to leave us."

She bowed her head in token of assent.

"Why, Julia?"

"Why? I am so utterly useless here," she replied with a smile, though tears glistened in her eyes.

"Useless—you?" said he, seizing her hands. "Ah, Julia, with an equal right could you blot out the sun in the heavens and ask of what use it was to the earth?"

With emotion he stooped and pressed her hands to his eyes, and as she sprang up in confusion, he drew her gently to him and looked fearfully and inquiringly

into the pale face, remarking with horror the fine lines which trouble and sorrow had impressed upon it.

"Julia, you can not go, remain with me—if you can forgive the blind, embittered fool. Julia, what have you not done for me! And I have not once thanked you!"

"Be mecirful—do not give me pity for love!" said she softly.

"Ah!" He laughed curtly. "Pity! Which of us needs pity the most? From you I require mercy, pity, patience—everything—everything. Do not leave me alone, Julia, if you do not wish me to despair—for you alone, you alone can restore my faith in fidelity and love."

"I?"

"Yes love, you alone!"

She raised her eyes dreamily. In the next garden the children were enjoying their game of ball, and without flowed the Rhine, while the air was laden with the perfume of thousands of blossoms. Spring at last! Sweet, intoxicating spring!

"Miss Good-for-nothing! Miss Good-for-nothing!" cried the thrush in the nut-tree.

She smiled. "Do you hear?" she asked in a low voice. "He said the same thing when we were young."

"Do not tease me!" he replied impatiently. "At this moment I know positively I can not live without you, Julia. And you?"

Without a word she put her arms around his neck and from her eyes two bright tears fell and trickled down her cheeks.

Oh, what a useless question!

When Frau Roettger reached home and heard that the doctor and Fraulein Julia had eaten in the garden, she turned her steps thither in surprise.

Then her feet hesitated. Under the nut-tree—well, she would sooner have expected the heavens to fall—stood the embittered, morose fellow embracing Miss Good-for-nothing and kissing her, and both seemed to have forgotten the entire world.

She turned and went toward the house. "Yes—yes—miracles and signs still occur," she whispered. Arrived in her room, she untied before the mirror the black ribbons of her cap, laid it with her usual care in the drawer, put on her every day cap with equal composure and tied her apron.

"Well," she murmured, "on close examination it is the simplest solution. I should not have thought of it—hm. And yet it is strange," she added, "how a thing can grow upon one unnoticed. When she said to-day she was going away, I was really startled. Well, so it has come about that Miss Good-for-nothing is to become my daughter-in law! One thing is sure, she is good, very good, and she loves him—and—"

"Mother, here is a daughter for you!" interrupted her son's voice. And hand in hand the doctor and his betrothed crossed the threshold.

THE END.

THE ✣ MARGUERITE ✣ SERIES

OF HIGH CLASS NOVELS.

12mo. Illustrated Paper Covers.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

No. 1.	Romance of Two Worlds, .	Marie Corelli
No. 2.	Won by Waiting, . . .	Edna Lyall
No. 3.	The Second Wife, ...	E. Marlitt
No. 4.	The First Violin, . .	Jessie Fothergill
No. 5.	Old Mam'selle's Secret, . . .	E. Marlitt
No. 6.	Her Girlhood's Lover, . .	Bertha N. Clay
No. 7.	Foiled by Love, . . .	Bertha N. Clay
No. 8.	For the Term of His Natural Life,	Marcus Clarke
No. 9.	Was She to Blame? . .	Mrs. Alexander
No. 10.	When a Woman Loves, . .	Beatrice Marean
No. 11.	Miss Good-for-nothing, .	W. Heimburg

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

E. A. WEEKS & COMPANY, PUBLISHERS,

276 & 278 FRANKLIN STREET,

CHICAGO.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
00012753834